Old Country Inns of England

by Henry P. Maskell
and Edward W. Gregory

M. D. Aylesworth

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OLD COUNTRY INNS OF ENGLAND

Uniform with this volume

INNS AND TAVERNS
OF OLD LONDON

Setting forth the historical and literary associations of those ancient hostelries, together with an account of the most notable coffee-houses, clubs, and pleasure gardens of the British metropolis.

By
HENRY C. SHELLEY

With coloured frontispiece, and
48 other illustrations

L. C. PAGE & COMPANY
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The Chequers, Loose

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BY

HENRY P. MASKELL

AND

EDWARD W. GREGORY

With Illustrations by
THE AUTHORS

BOSTON
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PREFACE

"WHY do your guide books tell us about nothing but Churches and Manor Houses?" Such was the not altogether unjustifiable complaint of an American friend whose motor car was undergoing repairs. He was stranded in a sleepy old market town of winding streets, overhanging structures and oddly set gables, where every stone and carved beam seemed only waiting an interpreter to unfold its story.

In the following pages we have attempted a classification and description of the inns, which not only sheltered our forefathers when on their journeys, but served as their usual places for meeting and recreation. The subject is by no means exhausted. All over England there are hundreds of other old inns quite as interesting as those which find mention, and it is hoped that our work may prove for many tourists the introduction to a most fascinating study.

Thoughtful men, including earnest Churchmen such as the Bishop of Birmingham and

the Rev. H. R. Gamble, are asking the question whether the old inns should be allowed to disappear. The public house as a national institution has still its purposes to fulfil, and a few suggestions have therefore been included with a view of showing how it might easily be adapted to modern social needs.

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OLD COUNTRY INNS

CHAPTER I

MANORIAL INNS

WHICH among the thousand of old inns to be met with on our country roads has a right to be called the oldest? There are many claimants. The title-deeds of the *Saracen's Head* at Newark refer back to 1341. Local antiquaries cite documentary evidence to prove that the *Seven Stars* at Manchester existed before the year 1356. Symond Potyn, who founded St. Catherine's Hospital for poor Pilgrims at Rochester in 1316, is described as "of the *Crown Inn*." A Nottingham ballad relates the adventures of one Dame Rose who kept the *Ram* in that town "in the days of good King Stephen." Then we have the witness of the German Ambassador to the comfort and excellence of the *Fountain* at Canterbury, when he lodged there in 1299, on the occasion of the marriage of King Edward I to Margaret of France. Nay, the legend runs that within its walls the four murderers of St. Thomas arranged the last

details of their plot in 1170, and that the wife of Earl Godwin stayed at this inn in 1029. But what are all these compared with the *Fighting Cocks* at St. Albans, said to be the oldest inhabited house in England? A few years ago its signboard modestly chronicled the fact that it had been "Rebuilt after the Flood."

Nevertheless, we can safely assert that no English inn has a history of more than 800 years, and that very few hostelries can trace their independent existence to a period earlier than the fourteenth century. Until the towns had acquired rights of self-government and trade had in consequence begun to expand, there was little occasion for inns. England under the Norman kings was a purely agricultural country with scattered villages where dependent tillers of the soil grouped their clay-walled thatched hovels around church and manor-house. Even ancient towns, with a record of a thousand years, were merely rather larger villages on a navigable river or a cross road. Foreign merchant ships were just beginning to call once more at the seaports on the chance of trade.

Travelling on the roads was attended with

serious dangers and inconveniences. Robbers abounded, some not so courteous and discriminating as the legendary Robin Hood. Armed retainers at the tail of some noble lord's retinue were occasionally not above a little highway robbery on their own account, and if the victim failed to beat off his assailant his remedy at law was precarious at best. Such a band, if sufficiently numerous, would even go so far as to attack the King's officers sent in pursuit of them. The journey might at any time be brought to an abrupt conclusion because the travellers' horses and carts were forcibly commandeered by the purveyor to the King or some great noble. The roads themselves were in a disgraceful state, full of deep ruts, holes and quagmires, quite impassable in wet weather; their repair was left to chance or the good-will of neighbouring owners. In the towns they were encumbered with heaps of refuse. The rolls of Parliament from the reign of Edward I onward contain numerous petitions for a regular highway tax.

A curious illustration of the lack of any systematic authority over the roads, even as late as the fifteenth century, is preserved in the records of the Manor of Aylesbury. A

local miller, named Richard Boose, needed some ramming clay for the repair of his mill. Accordingly his servants dug a great pit in the middle of the road, ten feet wide and eight feet deep, and so left it to become filled with water from the winter rains. A glover from Leighton Buzzard, on his way home from market, fell in and was drowned. Charged with manslaughter, the miller pleaded that he knew no place wherein to get the kind of clay he required except on the high road. He was acquitted.[1]

Furthermore, all England was parcelled out into manors, each a little principality in itself presided over by a lord who in practice possessed summary rights over life and property within his domain. A stranger might be called upon to undergo a very searching examination to account for his presence in the neighbourhood. Most of the inhabitants were forbidden to leave the demēsne without the consent of their lord. Not that this was a great hardship; the idea of a journey rarely occurs to the bucolic mind, and fully half the rural population of England in these days of cheap railway excursions are content to spend their lives within their native parish,

[1] Parker's "Manor of Aylesbury," 14.

or at any rate never venture beyond the market town.

In every manor there was a manor-house, the residence of the lord and the centre of the life of the community. It was usually quite a simple building on the main street near the church. Here were held the manor courts, view of frank pledge, assize of bread and ale and other quaint customs, some of which have come down to our own days. Hither at Hocktide and harvest would come the tenants and their wives, bringing their own platters, cups and napkins for their feast.

Such few travellers as were benighted on the road, small merchants or pedlars going to a local fair, a knight or squire on his way to court, Kings' messengers and officials, would naturally put up at the manor-house. Hospitality was so rarely called for that it was willingly afforded, just as it is at an Australian homestead in the backwoods. One more sleeping place on the rushes in the hall, another seat at the common table—above or below the salt according to the hosteller's estimate of the guest's condition in life—was no great matter. Doubtless each in his own degree made his present to the hosteller

in the morning; the butler in a country house still expects his solatium from the parting guest.

By the middle of the fourteenth century the roads had become more frequented, and it was no longer the fashion for the lord to reside in the comparatively humble manor-house. The cost of living had seriously increased; the nobility were impoverished by attendance at court, the foreign wars, and their crowd of retainers. So the lord retired to his more secluded castle or country seat, leaving strangers to be entertained at the manor-house by a steward who afterwards was replaced by a regular innkeeper as tenant. Throughout these changes the family crest or arms remained on the front of the building. Or sometimes the manor-house was turned to other uses and an inn was built close by, and the coat of arms hung over the door in order to induce travellers to transfer their custom thither. Such is the origin of the official inn throughout feudal Europe, but in the Black Forest and the Tyrol the process was sometimes completely reversed. As the nobility became poorer they parted with their estates and turned innkeepers. One can still now and then make the surprising

discovery that mine host is by birth a baron, actually entitled to bear the arms above his door, and that it is his ancestors who sleep under those magnificent marble tombs in the minster hard by.

Inns with heraldic emblems for their signs, or called the Norfolk Arms, Dorset Arms, Neville Arms, according to the local landowner, abound everywhere—the actual arms scarcely ever being emblazoned on account of the heavy tax on armorial bearings. But it is not easy to trace their connection with the manor-house. Manors have been alienated over and over again ; with each change the sign on the inn has usually been repainted with the arms of the new owner. One of the few exceptions is the *Tiger* at Lindfield, which carries us back to the Michelbournes of the fourteenth century.

For a characteristic example of a manorial inn we must invite our readers to visit the sleepy town of Midhurst, venerable in its winding streets of projecting upper stories, deeply moulded eaves and gables ; a town nestling among the gentler slopes of the South Downs, on the banks of that sweetest and most musical of trout streams, the Sussex Rother. Here is an old inn, far away from

the great roads which no vandal has yet ventured to rebuild. The older portion dates from about 1430, and no doubt stands on the site of the original manor-house of the De Bohuns. It is an excellent example of an

The Spread Eagle, Midhurst

early timber-framed house of the better class, with massive old oak ceilings, ingle-nooks and "down" fires. The old fireplaces and recessed ovens are pronounced by experts to be genuine fourteenth-century work. A very large addition was made in 1650, when the stables were also built. This latter portion will not be regretted by the visitor who

loves more comfort and cheery surroundings than is possible in a conscientiously preserved fourteenth-century hotel.

In clearing away the paint from one of the panelled rooms at the *Spread Eagle* an inscription was discovered: "The Queen's Room," possibly referring to the much travelled Queen Elizabeth who was entertained "marvellously, nay rather excessively," by Sir Anthony Browne, first Viscount Montagu, at Cowdray, in 1591. A melancholy interest attaches to the sign of the *Spread Eagle.* It was the crest of the Montagu family, which came to an end in 1793 with the drowning of the last Viscount Montagu at Schaffhausen, on the Rhine, in the very same week that his splendid mansion at Cowdray was destroyed by fire.

It is worth noting that the double-gabled house in the foreground of our first picture of the *Spread Eagle* (once also an inn, now a cosy temperance hotel) was built early in the seventeenth century by an ancestor of Richard Cobden.

On royal manors the crown was more frequently employed as a distinguishing mark of the manorial hall than the royal arms.

Inns having for their signs the King's Arms have usually assumed this title during the Reformation period when the royal arms were ordered to be set up in the churches. An exception is the *King's Arms* Hotel at

The Spread Eagle, Midhurst

Godalming, which has every reason to claim to be the original inn of the royal manor. The present building is not much more than two centuries old, a fine substantial example of red-brick domestic architecture in the reign of good Queen Anne. An oak-panelled

room is shown to visitors as that in which Peter the Great Czar of Russia slept during his visit to England. The landlord's bill on this occasion is preserved as a curiosity in the Bodleian library. The items of the bill are as follows: Breakfast—half a sheep, a quarter of lamb, ten pullets, twelve chickens, three quarts of brandy, six quarts of mulled wine, seven dozen of eggs, with salad in proportion. At dinner the company had five ribs of beef weighing three stone, one sheep weighing fifty pound, three quarters of lamb, a shoulder and loin of veal boiled, eight pullets, eight rabbits, two-and-a-half dozen sack and one dozen of claret. The number of guests was twenty-one.

There is another old inn at Godalming with the sign of *Three Lions*. We have not been able to obtain any authentic information about its history, and it may be only a coincidence that the royal arms before Edward III quartered the arms of France consisted of three lions on a shield.

Even if inns that can prove their authentic manorial origin are few and far between, this class of hostelry must once have been the most important of all. The nomenclature of the thirteenth-century manor is preserved

in every detail of the modern inn. The hosteller remains as the ostler, who now usually confines his attention to four-footed visitors; the chamberlain has changed his sex (though only since the days of Sir Roger de Coverley) and has become the Chamber-maid. In most old manor-houses provisions, wine and ale were served from a special department close to the porch and called the "bower," from Norse *Bür*, meaning buttery. Frequenters of a modern inn resort for the same purpose to the "bar." Lastly, the presiding genius in every hotel or tavern, no matter how humble, is invariably referred to as "the Landlord." The very word "Inn," like the French *hôtel*, anciently implied the town residence of a nobleman. The Inns of Court were nearly all of them houses of the nobility converted for the purpose of lodging the law students there. The same remark applies to the inns which preceded the cloistered colleges of our older universities.

But we usually know the English inn by a much nobler name—a name which carries us back to an age many generations before there were any manorial lords to the tribal chief, and beyond the tribal chieftain to the

common dwelling of our Aryan forefathers. We generally refer to it as "The public-house." It is the one secular place of resort where we can all forget our social differences; where millionaire and pauper, nobleman and navvy can hob-nob together on equal ground if they care to do so. The public-house opens its doors to every well-behaved citizen without distinction of persons. It is the abiding witness to the common brotherhood of man. For the public-house is not merely an institution to provide lodging and refreshment for the individual wayfarer, nor yet a shop for the sale of certain specific liquids; it is a place where men can meet to entertain each other, and converse with their fellow men on equal terms. As such it is hateful to the sectary, who would fain see men sorted out into exclusive coteries for the airing of their own opinions and class grievances.

CHAPTER II

MONASTIC INNS

Rural England, during the two centuries after the Conquest, was practically under martial law. The hardy Men of Kent and the Vale of Holmsdale were strong enough to retain some of their ancient rights and privileges. Beyond these districts local government was suppressed and a military despotism took its place, administered often by half-civilized chieftains. One influence alone was formidable enough to modify and soften the crude tyranny of the feudal system —that of the Monasteries.

The religious orders were the only class who had directly profited by the new regime to increase their power. Hitherto merely national they now became, in a way, part of an international system. Not that they ceased to be patriotic. In the combinations against regal misrule which produced the Great Charters, Bishops and Abbots threw in their lot heartily with the lay barons. But in themselves they formed at this time

an almost independent authority with special privileges dangerous to meddle with, because behind them was the Universal Church and its temporal head the Pope, now just reaching the zenith of his authority.

It was the religious orders that saved England from barbarism. Each monastery was a kind of impregnable city within which all the graces of civilization were fostered. Here learning, literature and art were diligently studied; rich and poor, bondman and free, were welcomed as scholars if only they proved their ability to profit by the tuition. A certain number of manors were allotted to the Church, and this number was constantly being increased by royal or private benefaction. The tenants of ecclesiastical manors, more especially the villeins or serfs, were in these early times much better treated than those subject to the secular lords. The tenures were generally easy, labour customs could be commuted for a small sum of money, and the serfs could acquire freedom on very moderate terms. Enlightened forms of lease were introduced.

The monks were the great agriculturists of the Middle Ages, and so were concerned in the maintenance of facilities for traffic. Apart

from this their one duty to the State was to satisfy the *trinoda necessitas*, particularly the care of roads and bridges. This was considered a pious and meritorious duty often rewarded with special indulgences; such undertakings were a work of mercy, in that they befriended the unfortunate traveller. The roads adjoining a monastic estate were usually kept in fair condition, as compared with those in other districts. The first London Bridge was built by the Prior of St. Mary Overie; another great endowed bridge, that over the Medway at Rochester, owes its origin to the great St. Dunstan. Nearly all the picturesque gothic bridges which still survive were the work of the monks. Travelling was in many other ways directly fostered by the monasteries. Communications were constantly passing between the various houses of an order, many of which were on the Continent. Authority for the election of a new abbot or a change in the statutes would have to be obtained from Rome. The two centuries after the Conquest witnessed a continual rebuilding and beautifying of the Abbey Churches. Materials had to be brought from a distance, skilled artists engaged, rich plate, metal work, and ornate vestments procured

for the altar-service. All this was a great stimulus to trade.

The doors of the monastery were open to all comers, and there were many reasons why hospitality would be sought at a religious house in preference to the manorial inn. Rich people resorted to them because of their comfort and security ; the poor because there was nothing to pay. No unpleasant questions were likely to be asked ; so we find Quentin Durward (in the novel of Sir Walter Scott, which gives us such an excellent idea of the period he describes,) always avoiding the public inns and taking refuge at the monasteries in order to minimize the risk of his secret mission being betrayed. Most of these houses had been endowed by the king or nobles, and their descendants considered themselves at home within the precincts.

These noble guests, especially when they were accompanied by a miscellaneous retinue, were apt to be rather too roisterous and turbulent for the cloister. A statute of Edward I forbids anyone to lodge at a religious house without the formal invitation of the Superior, unless he be the founder, and then he must conform closely to the rules and

regulations. The poor alone were to retain the right to the grace of hospitality free of charge. Numerous later statutes were enacted with the same end in view. The monks of Battle rebuilt their Guest House outside the Abbey Gate where it still remains a most beautiful example of fifteenth-century half-timber work. Long before this time, however, another expedient had been devised to cope with the increasing crowd of travellers needing rest and refreshment.

Whenever we come across an inn bearing the sign of the *Bull* it is worth while to inquire whether there was formerly a religious house in the neighbourhood. We have examined into the history of upwards of a hundred "Bulls," and even where definite proof has not been forthcoming, the circumstantial evidence has always been sufficient to arouse suspicion. It is especially a common sign in connection with a nunnery. Thus the inns of this name at Dartford, Barking and Malling, all three very ancient, belonged to the local abbeys. At Hythe, on the Medway, a manor of Malling Abbey, there is a *Bull Inn;* and another at Theale in Berkshire, which was the property of the prioress of Goring. Elfrida, the mother-in-law of Edward the Martyr,

founded a nunnery at Reading in expiation of the base murder of that prince. This nunnery was abolished owing to scandals in the twelfth century, but a *Bull Inn* still flourishes near the site of the Abbey Gate.

The Bull, Sudbury

At Newington, next Sittingbourne, the prioress was found strangled in her bed and the nuns were removed elsewhere, but the *Bull* remains as the chief inn to this day.

In deeds of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries relating to the *Bull* at Barking, this house is referred to as "tectum vel

hospitium vocatum le *Bole*." *Bole* is the old French equivalent of the Latin *bulla*, a seal from which it is clear that no bovine connection is implied by the sign, but merely that the inn was licensed under the seal of the Abbey. Some antiquaries have suggested that such inns were tied houses where ale of monastic brewing was sold, reminding us of the current explanation of the xx and xxx marks on barrels of strong ale, as having been originally the seals guaranteeing the quality in the days when the monks were the leading brewers. It is true that the peculiar virtue of the wells at Burton-on-Trent was known at a very early period, and that the ale brewed in the local Abbey was an article of commerce when Richard I was king. Tied houses were not uncommon in the Middle Ages, witness the *Bear Inn* in Southwark, leased in 1319 by Thomas Drinkwater, wine merchant to James Beauflur, on condition that he purchased all his liquor from the said Thomas Drinkwater, who agreed to furnish all needful flagons, mugs, cutlery and linen. On the other hand, very few collegiate houses brewed ale beyond the needs of their own consumption, and we have not yet come across any lease binding their tenants.

Mention is often made of a brewhouse attached to the inn. As to the marks on the barrels a prosaic solution is that these are merely excise marks of the seventeenth century, when beer was taxed according to its strength.

Whatever the terms of its original lease

Pigeon House at the Bull, Long Melford

may have been the *Bull* profited by monastic favour and protection to grow into a big and prosperous establishment. It is nearly always the leading hostelry of the town. Two centuries ago the *Bull* at St. Albans was described by Baskerville as the largest in England,

but with the decay of the coaching trade it has retired into private life. Mr. Jingle's recommendation of the *Bull* at Rochester, "Good house, nice beds," might be fairly applied to nearly every *Bull Inn* of our acquaintance. The sign is a symbol of steady-going respectable old-fashioned ways, where comfort is not sacrificed to economy, and where the cellar and kitchen are alike irreproachable. Any remnants of antiquity are concealed behind a broad Georgian façade, for good business entails frequent rebuilding. The *Bull* at Barking is now to all appearance a quite modern hotel. Few would guess that its history could be traced for seven hundred years, and that twice during that time it has been occupied by a single family for more than a century. In 1636 it was sold to St. Margaret's Hospital in Westminster, for the sum of one shilling; and therefore continues to be collegiate property.

To avoid confusion we must remind the reader that the "*Bull's Head*" denotes the crest of the Nevilles or, occasionally, Anne Boleyn. The *Pied Bull* is a whimsical sign found near a cattle market or bull-ring. A few inns, too, received the name of the Bull in Elizabethan or Jacobean times when

astrology was popular, and Taurus happened to be the house ascendant in the horary figure. Thus in Ben Jonson's "Alchemist":

"A townsman born in Taurus given the bull, or the Bull's head; in Aries the ram."

Sometimes in place of the official seal the monastic inn bore for its sign a picture or carving of a religious mystery. Outside the Abbey Gate, at Bury St. Edmunds, is the *Angel Inn*, once called the *Angelus* or *Salutation;* there is another *Angel Inn*, probably monastic, in Guildford. Both of these are famous for their beautiful Early English crypts, groined and vaulted in stone. The *Angel* at Grantham belonged to the Knights Templars. At Addington in Kent the *Angel* has a very odd staircase of great antiquity, each tread being a solid log of timber; and an underground passage, which local gossip connects with a priory at Ryarsh. Another monastic *Angel* at Basingstoke is said to be the subject of Ben Jonson's coarse epigram, inspired by the departure of his hostess, Mrs. Hope and her daughter Prudence. The *Cock* as an emblem of St. Peter, and the *Crosskeys* are frequently found. The most interesting inn in the city of Westminster was the *Cock and Tabard*, in Tothill Street,

pulled down in 1871. It dated from the reign of Edward III, and it was here, according to Stowe, that the workmen engaged in the completion of the Abbey Church were paid. From its yard two centuries later the first stage-coach to Oxford was started. Battle Abbey possessed several "*Star*" inns, the best known of which was the *Star* at Alfriston, which may either be named after Our Lady, Star of the Sea, or after the Earl of Sussex, one of whose badges was the star.

Semi-religious signs such as the *Angel*, *Star* and *Mitre* are not always monastic, nor need they imply pre-reformation origin. The *Angel* at Islington is, comparatively speaking, a mushroom upstart. Under the sign of the *Angel*, Jacobs, a Jew, opened in 1650 one of the first coffee-houses in the parish of St. Peter, Oxford. A pious Roundhead might find chapter and verse for the sign and gloat over the conceit of entertaining an Angel—perhaps not unawares. Puritan sects have been known to give the official title of "Angel" to their itinerant preachers. The *Cock Tavern*, in Fleet Street, in spite of the splendid gilt chanticleer (generally attributed to Grinling Gibbons) has no connection with St. Peter. An advertisement, printed in the *Intelligence*

of 1665, shows that its old name was the *Cock and Bottle*. Cock is still used in some parts of the country for the spigot, or tap in a barrel; and the sign was simply a short way of informing the bibulous that they could obtain here ale both on draught and in bottle.

A monastic inn far exceeding in world-wide fame all others, is that *Tabard Inn* in the Borough, whence five hundred years ago thirty merry pilgrims set forth on a spring-tide morning on their three days' journey along the old Watling Street to Canterbury. The *Tabard* was a speculation of the Abbot of Hyde, Winchester, and no doubt a profitable one, for its landlords were always men of character and substance who would attract guests of good class. Harry Bailey, Chaucer's friend, represented Southwark in two successive parliaments, and another landlord, William Rutton, sat in Parliament for East Grinstead in 1529. Built in 1307, together with a hostel for the clergy of the monastery, it remained in much the same condition as when Chaucer sang its praises until about 1602. The stone-coloured wooden gallery, in front of which hung a picture of the Canterbury Pilgrimage, attributed to Blake, and the

so-called "Pilgrim's room" were probably of this period; the rest was rebuilt after the great fire of Southwark, 1676. Twenty years ago all was demolished, and a gin-shop on its site of modern, vulgar red-brick mock gothic absurdly claims the title of "*The Old Tabard.*"

One religious order never attempted to divert the increasing stream of guests into the inns. With the Knights Hospitallers all comers were welcomed; the entertainment of strangers remained their chief duty. The accounts of their house in Clerkenwell for the year 1337 show that they had spent more than their whole revenue—at least £8,000, the reason being, as the prior explains, the hospitality given to strangers, members of the royal family and other grandees who all expected to be entertained in accordance with their rank. A noble would occasionally send his whole suite to the convent in order to save expense. The Knight monks finding no Paynim to demolish became an order of hotel-keepers, and travellers never failed to profit by the generous fare provided in their numerous establishments.

At Dorking, when the Knights departed, the innkeeper took their place and continues to keep up the old traditions. The *White*

Yard of the White Horse, Dorking

Cross is now the *White Horse*, though not from any similarity of names but because the Earls of Arundel, and afterwards the Dukes of Norfolk, were lords of the manor. In later life the *White Horse* was a famous coaching house, and rebuildings have apparently destroyed any feature older than say three centuries. Perhaps it was in the yard of this house, where a noble old vine spreads green fragrance over the great white gables, that Charles Dickens met the individual who sat for the portrait of Tony Weller. Deep underneath the building are a series of vaults cut out of the sandstone—maybe a relic of the Hospitallers. In one of the lowest is a curious old well. Tradition has it that these cellars were used in the smuggling days. To lovers of the road the quaint gables and broad oriels of the *White Horse* are no mean landmark, for they are the destination of a real old-fashioned coach and four running hither from Charing Cross daily during the summer months.

CHAPTER III

THE HOSPICES

MENTION of the Knights Hospitallers brings us by an easy stage to pilgrimages; it was the original purpose of this order to keep open the route to the Holy Places and to assist the sick and needy pilgrims on their journey. Some pious merchants of Amalfi obtained permission to found a refuge for destitute pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, about the middle of the eleventh century. At first the brethren of St. John were content with nursing the sick and relieving the hungry in the Jerusalem Hospice, and in this work of mercy earned the toleration of Saladin when he once more captured Jerusalem from the Christians. But at this time they had already taken to the sword and had become very active and trenchant members of the Church Militant.

Rich in glowing romance and stirring adventure is the story of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and the many expeditions to regain possession of the Holy Land. We are

more concerned with the ordinary Englishman. While the Crusade ensured the absence for a season of a goodly number of turbulent lords and truculent retainers, he was at liberty to visit the shrines of his own country. At Glastonbury was the chapel of St. Joseph of Arimathea and the sacred Thorn, as venerable as anything in Christendom. Hardly less ancient was the shrine of the first martyr, St. Alban ; while at Durham he might kneel in reverence before the relics of the great St. Cuthbert and the Venerable Bede. St. Ethelbert of Hereford and St. Edmund at Bury St. Edmunds would equally invite the suffrages of their clients.

Pilgrimages played their part, and a very important one too, in the making of England. They gave the ordinary man an opportunity to travel. A subject race of stolid peasantry, who otherwise would never have left the confines of their lord's estate, were encouraged to go on a long journey and see what the world outside was like. If any man wished to go on a pilgrimage he needed only a scrip and staff consecrated by his parish priest. So furnished no lord could detain him. By virtue of his pious and meritorious vow he would find friends and assistance everywhere.

The most desperate characters would respect the sanctity of his profession; if a robber found that his victim was a pilgrim he restored all that he had taken.[1] During his absence, any monastery was prepared to take charge of his affairs, nor could any legal proceedings be taken against him until his return. Pilgrimages were the thin end of the wedge which was destined to shatter the whole feudal system. They sowed the seeds of the great Revolt of the peasants under Richard II. They instilled into the heart of the people that roving restless spirit that made the Englishman the most successful coloniser the world has ever known.

Under the very curfew the torch of liberty was smouldering. It is significant that nearly all the places of popular pilgrimage established between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries had a political basis. The figure of the last king of the old English stock stood out bright against the darkness of England, trodden under foot by the foreigner. Memories of peace, prosperity, and independence gathered round his name, and while men were clamouring for the good laws of Edward the Confessor, throngs of pilgrims

[1] "Paston Letters," III, 304.

hastened to implore intercession of the Saint ; to-day his tomb in the Abbey of Westminster is the most hallowed spot for every true Englishman. A century later the scene of the martyrdom at Canterbury was attracting even vaster crowds, nearly one-tenth of the whole population of the country resorting hither for worship in a single year. We may well believe that they came to reverence St. Thomas of Canterbury, as not merely a devout ascetic, but as the first Commoner of English birth who dared to brave the absolute power of the King.

There were several quite unauthorised pilgrimages of political origin. Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, who had headed the barons in their agitation against Edward II and the royal favourites, became, after his execution, a saint in popular estimation ; pilgrimages were organised to Pontefract as well as to a picture of the " Saint" set up in St. Paul's Cathedral in spite of royal protests. By a strange revulsion of sentiment the tomb of Edward II, himself one of the least desirable of kings, became a place of pilgrimage ; and a special inn had to be built at Gloucester to accommodate those who wished to make their prayers and vows on his behalf. The

good Simon de Montfort, although he died under excommunication, was accounted a saint; and Latin hymns and versicles were composed for his office.[1]

Of all the devotional pilgrimages none could stand in comparison with Our Lady of Walsingham. It may be regarded as illustrative of the English character that this shrine grew into notoriety, without any startling miracle, from simple and homely beginnings. A pious Norfolk lady caused a little wooden house to be built in imitation of the Holy House at Nazareth and invited her neighbours to join with her there in meditation on the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. With time and a great concourse of pilgrims came an elaboration of legend and a variety of foreign accessories, maybe exaggerated in the half satirical description given by Erasmus. But when the true unvarnished story of Walsingham comes to be written it will show that to the very end a degree of sober good sense controlled the authorities there.

In the fourteenth century pilgrimages had become the fashion for all classes. With

[1] See also J. J. Jusserand. "English Wayfaring Life," p. 342.

kings and nobles they were a ceremonial duty. The sick man went to regain his health and discovered it, maybe, on the breezy heath or sunny downs long before he reached the Shrine. The simple devout soul, no doubt, found in the restful minster the religious consolation he came in search of. More worldly people enjoyed an inexpensive holiday. Merchants went on pilgrimages to avoid their creditors. During their absence an uncomfortable " slump " in business could be tided over. Chaucer half conveys a sly suggestion that this was the motive underlying the presence of the merchant in the "Canterbury Tales " :

" There wiste no wight that he was in debt."

Workmen weary of a thankless task found a pretext in a pilgrimage for going off on the quest of a new master. An idle apprentice had an excuse ready at hand for exchanging the dull city workshop for a week in the Kentish orchards. A villein might succeed in reaching some distant town where he could live unbeknown by his lord for the necessary year and a day which meant permanent freedom. Statutes were passed over and over again to restrain these abuses, but they were all evaded. The pilgrimage was an

institution hallowed from time immemorial, and none could gainsay the right of every Christian man to take in hand his scrip and staff.

Imagine the motley procession almost ceaseless from morn till eve on the Roman roads to the North through St. Albans, Eastward to Canterbury, or Westward by Reading or Salisbury towards the favoured resort. Ladies of rank in their horse-litters or rich tapestried carriages ; peasants in their springless two-wheeled dog-carts. Then a company of middle-class people on horseback, all of them, men and women alike, well able to manage their steeds. The very poor travelled on foot, and many better class trod barefoot some portion of the Walsingham green way as a penitential exercise. Lame, halt and blind negotiated their journey as best they could. The pilgrim roads were fairly good ; Watling Street ran almost straight as an arrow as it was set out by the Roman engineers from Deptford to Canterbury. All roads were said to lead to Walsingham, and that through Ware and Newmarket, if not Roman, was nearly as direct. Pilgrims on horseback from the West of England might utilize the so-called " Pilgrims' Way " to Canterbury,

but by the fourteenth century the Kentish portion had been broken up into a series of feeders to the Watling Street. A similar bridle path ran from Newmarket towards Fakenham on the Walsingham route.

When night fell these wayfarers would tax all available resources for their shelter and sustenance. At the manor-house they were very unwelcome; the lord had good cause to detest the idea of poor people going on pilgrimage. The monastery could only receive a small proportion. Many needed nursing as well as rest. And so a special form of lodging-house—half inn, half charitable institution had to be devised. The great Hospice at Jerusalem, which provided for fully a thousand visitors at one time, was regarded as the model, but the idea is much older. At Cebrero, in Northern Spain, there is a *Hospicio Real*, founded in 836 by King Alphonso II, for pilgrims crossing the pass of Piedrafita on the way from Segovia to St. James of Compostella. St. John's Hospital at Winchester claims to have been originally founded by St. Brinstan about the year 930 for sick and poor pilgrims to St. Swithin.

For the Canterbury pilgrims there were many of these hospices. That at Rochester,

a private benefaction, we have already mentioned. The *George Inn*, which still can show a fine Early English crypt, may also be described as a pilgrims' inn, though, perhaps, like that at St. Albans, for the better class of people. There was a pilgrims' resting house at Bapchild, near Sittingbourne. Ospringe, near Faversham, takes its name not from the spring which used to babble so pleasantly along the water lane, but from the great hospice founded by Henry III. By a similar " derangement of epitaphs " the hospice at Colnbrook has developed into the *Ostrich Inn*. A considerable portion of the hospice at Ospringe survives to this day in half-timbered buildings around the *Crown Inn*, and the chapel is said to form the foundations of the *Ship Inn* on the opposite side of the road. It is more likely that this inn stands on the site of the separate establishment provided for lepers. This hospice must have been of great extent and provided accommodation for rich and poor alike. A master and three regular brethren of the Order of the Holy Cross were to superintend the work of hospitality and nursing. Owing to an outbreak of the plague in the reign of Edward IV the brethren forsook the place in a panic

the great Justiciary, in the reign of Edward III ; and on crossing to Calais the adventurer found another *Maison Dieu*, the first of a long chain of resting-places on the way to Rome, the Three Kings at Cologne, or Rocamadour, in Guyenne, according as his fancy or devotion might direct him.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF THE TOWNS

EVERY high road leads sooner or later to a market town, and in that town the tourist may be sure of finding a *White Hart Inn*. The *White Hart* is the commonest of signs all through England. Half-timbered and rambling, with the marks of decrepit old age and long service writ large all over it, this inn is in evidence near the market-place, often in a street of the same name, to remind us of its importance in the days gone by. Sometimes, as at Guildford and Brentwood, the old building lies hidden behind a more modern front. When the builder has laid violent hands on a *White Hart*, title-deeds or other authentic records of its antiquity are in nearly every case available.

A vague tradition attempts to explain these inns as royal posting-houses, it being supposed that stations to supply fresh horses for the royal journeys were first established during the last years of Edward III. Undoubtedly the *White Hart* inns all date from

the beginning of the reign of Richard II. After the scandals and misrule during the

The White Hart, Brentwood

long dotage of his father, the nation centred all their hopes in the young king who showed promise of becoming a wise and able ruler.

The policy of the good Parliament would once more govern in the council, and it seemed a happy omen when he took for his badge the white stag with a collar of gold around his neck. This legend, portrayed on so many signboards, was a delight of the mediæval romantic writers: the white hart was never to be taken alive except by one who had conquered the whole world. Its oldest form appears in the pages of Aristotle who relates how Diomedes consecrated a white stag to Diana; and how it lived for a thousand years before it was killed by Agathocles, King of Sicily. Pliny gives Alexander the Great, and later writers Julius Cæsar and Charlemagne, as the Emperors who captured the young white stag and released it after decorating it with the golden band. On the Dorchester road, near Stowminster, there used to be an inn with this kingly stag painted for a sign, and underneath the following lines translated from a mediæval quatrain by some not very conscientious scholar who has imported Cæsar, stag and all, into the West of England:

"When Julius Cæsar landed here,
I was then a little deer,
When Julius Cæsar reigned King,

Round my neck he put this ring;
Whoever shall me overtake,
Spare my life for Cæsar's sake!"

But when we begin to inquire into the actual title-deeds of the *White Hart* inns, we find ourselves in the midst of movements of far deeper import than the outburst of national loyalty on the signboards. The story of a great mediæval fiscal policy; the birth of home manufactures; the struggle of the towns for municipal rights. The sign of the White Hart marks a turning-point in the great social and industrial revolution which was to bring to the great body of Englishmen prosperity and freedom.

No country could compare with England, during the Middle Ages, for the production of wool. From the twelfth century onwards wool was almost the only export and the principal source of wealth for landowners and farmers. So important a trade was bound to receive the attention of Chancellors in search of a new tax. Accordingly, early in the thirteenth century, a system was devised by which no wool could possibly be exported until it had contributed its quota to the royal treasury. Wool, as well as some other raw materials, such as skins, lead and tin, had to

be brought for sale to an appointed place called the Staple, where the trade was under the superintendence of a special corporation whose seal must appear on every bale. The Staple was at first fixed at Bruges, the chief seaport of the Flemish cloth manufacturer, but during the reign of Edward III, it was moved to England, and then finally, in 1390, established at Calais. Thither every dealer was obliged to carry his bales by certain approved routes, through Boston, London, Sandwich, Winchester, or Southampton, and these towns became subsidiary centres of the Staple. *Staple Inn*, in Holborn, was an inn for merchants of the Staple before it became a resort for the lawyers. In the end the merchants of the Staple grew into a ring of powerful monopolists, who controlled prices, regulated times of sale, and even secured the carrying trade in their own hands. The sale of English sheep abroad, either for breeding or for shearing, was also forbidden under very heavy penalties.

All these vexatious formalities in getting his wool to Calais, and the rapacity of the merchants of the Staple, disgusted the English farmer. As early as 1258 Simon de Montfort urged that England ought to be a centre of

manufacture, and not merely a source of raw material. Edward III, while with one hand consolidating the power of the monopolists who controlled the Staple, on the other hand stimulated the obvious remedy. He invited Flemish weavers to settle in this country. By the end of his reign the whirring sound of the looms might be heard all through Norfolk, Essex and Kent. From a country of farmers which exported wool, England was soon to be transformed into a country of manufacturers who exported cloth. The sale of wool at the Staple dwindled away, while Yorkshire tweeds and Cotswold broadcloths were winning the preference for price and quality in the most distant markets.

The commercial prosperity of England is generally said to have been built up on the industries arising out of the woolpack. But in the fourteenth century capital was already being found for the development of many other enterprises. In 1307 there were complaints about London fog, owing to the use of coal as fuel. In the Sussex weald and the Forest of Dean the iron trade was so busy that it was necessary to import a considerable portion of the ore from Sweden and Spain. The excellence of English guns, it is said,

contributed largely to the victories of Henry V in France.[1] The lost art of brickmaking was reintroduced by the Flemings. Cheaper labour and materials induced copper-founders from Dinant and bell-founders from Liege to transfer their trades hither. Instead of bringing beer from Prussia the shipmasters found it more profitable to export Maidstone ales into Flanders.

Meanwhile, the towns from a position of semi-servitude had been step by step attaining to liberty, wealth and the political franchise. London led the way owing to the presence of merchants from Rouen and Caen who settled there immediately after the Conquest and took the position of a governing class prepared to treat with the King for privileges. The steps by which the various boroughs secured their rights of self-government, free speech in free meeting and equal justice would need several volumes to describe. They were won by steady solid perseverance, by customs allowed to grow up unnoticed during the quarrels between the barons and the royal favourites, by a direct bargain with the lord of the manor, or in a

[1] J. R. Green. "Town Life in the Fifteenth Century," I, 55.

few instances by less ingenuous methods. Most of the towns, like London, were situated on the royal demesne. With these the work was comparatively easy. Secure of his ultimate supremacy, and indifferent to small sources of power, the king was generally willing to surrender local claims for a fixed payment in money. A Corporation was a better security for the payment of dues than petty officers given to peculation. Accordingly, from the reign of Henry I, charters were granted giving a progressive degree of liberty, although until the reign of John the King retained the nomination of the portreeve or mayor.

The feudal baron was not so willing to part with his supremacy. But the nobility were rapidly becoming poorer; and the issue of the battle was ultimately with the strong. Either the powerful merchants' guild, returning unwearied to the fray after each rebuff, by its steady dogged agitation ended in forcing a compromise, or else the traders deserted the place and let it dwindle away into a poverty-stricken village. Sometimes an ancient charter was alleged to exist and prescriptive rights claimed before a commission in the King's Courts; and the longest purse could fee the most persistent counsel.

Much less hopeful were the prospects of citizens whose lord was a religious house. The monasteries were rich, well acquainted with forms of law, and as trustees not justified in parting with their hereditary assets. Hitherto promoters of progress, the monks now began, to be regarded as a stumbling-block on the path towards freedom. And from this arose the smouldering hatred of the monasteries that underlies so much of the literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. During the great revolt of the villeins the monasteries and bishops' palaces on the route of the insurgents were all burnt and sacked by the mob. At St. Albans, Cirencester, and even in the cinque port of Romney, the struggles of the townsfolk to burst their thraldom were endless and always futile. It was organised force in conflict with organised authority, and the result was that the latter prevailed. At Coventry the motto of the two contending bodies was *divide et impera*. The Merchant Guild became the Guild of the Holy Trinity and shared with the Corpus Christi Guild (of which the Prior and other Churchmen were members) all authority in the town, nominating the Mayor and all the important officials.

Simon de Montfort, "the father of English liberty," was the first to recognise the growing importance of the commercial middle classes by summoning two burgesses from each of the town boroughs to his Parliament in 1264, and their presence was treated as a matter of course in subsequent Parliaments, though they formed a comparatively insignificant factor. In the reign of Edward III, when the Knights of the Shire associated with them to form the future House of Commons, their growing wealth and ability to make terms with the King as a condition of granting supplies was recognised and a marked increase of parliamentary activity commenced. Their "petitions" became on the assent of the Crown Statutes of the Realm, and henceforward the Lower House was to initiate nearly all legislation.

And now we can return to our *White Hart* inns. They were the first inns to be built by the corporations, or at least under their licence. Secure in the possession of their charter, proud of their ever-increasing commerce, hopeful of the future privileges and reforms that were likely to be obtained by their burgesses in Parliament, the towns began to provide new inns of a superior kind

for the merchants who came regularly to their markets. They were held direct from the King, and to the reigning king alone they looked for any future marks of favour. Hence these inns almost invariably bear the badge

The Swan, Felstead

of the reigning king. When Richard II was deposed the White Hart gave place to the White Swan of Henry IV, and this latter is nearly as common on the signboards. Barons and earls might dispute and make war on one another as to who was the sovereign *de jure ;* the concern of the towns was with the king *de facto*. The Commons regarded

each change of dynasty from Plantagenet to red rose and from red rose to white rose with the complacency of the Vicar of Bray. The old aristocracy ruined themselves and died out amid these political disputes ; meanwhile the burghers grew rich and their posterity formed the nucleus of a new aristocracy of English race and of more patriotic instincts.

The signboards tell the same tale all through the fifteenth century. The Antelope of Henry VI, the White Lion of Edward IV, and the White Boar of Richard III each take their turn. The changes they represented meant little more than incidental gossip to the burghers. All the real life of the citizens was in their home and trade, in their craft guilds, in treaties with neighbouring towns, or in the little controversies of the town council.

We know only a few incidental details about the internal comforts of the White Hart inns. The majority of the guests slept in large rooms, on couches or wooden bedsteads. Only a few very important grandees were accorded a private *camera*. The bed was a long sack-like mattress stuffed with straw or hay ; great folk would carry

with them their own bed on their journeys. Most people lay in their ordinary clothes on the bed, though counterpanes and linen were just coming into use. Carpets were chiefly employed like tapestry for hanging on the walls and diminishing the continual draughts. The women had their special apartments; the serving men slept on the rushes of the hall, while the grooms were left to make the best of stable and barn. Meals were taken at fixed hours, at a long movable table on trestles in the hall, guests and servants sitting down together, but placed according to rank. Some of the dishes would not commend themselves to fastidious moderns, but at least, there was never any lack of good wholesome fare; loaves, joints and meat pasties all on a gargantuan scale. Wines of British as well as foreign extraction competed with the nut brown ale. Essex was in those days the vineyard of England.

How much we have fallen off in the capacity of our stomachs from the good old times of open-air life and daily exercise on horseback may be judged from the following allowance of provisions granted to Lady Lucy, one of the maids of honour to Queen Katherine of Aragon:

"Breakfast—A chine of beef, a loaf, a gallon of ale.
Luncheon—Bread and a gallon of ale.
Dinner—A piece of boiled beef, a slice of roast meat, a gallon of ale.
Supper—Porridge, mutton, a loaf, and a gallon of ale."

When the Warden of Merton College travelled with two of his fellows and four servants from Oxford to Durham in 1331, the season being winter, their average bill was 2d. for beds for the whole party, or for the servants alone, one halfpenny; at the town inns of fifty years later the price of a bed was one penny, and the increased comfort warranted the higher charge.[1] The private rooms, instead of being numbered, received names according to the subject portrayed on the tapestry hangings. This custom continued in old-fashioned inns up to quite recent times, and has served as the basis of stage humour of a sort:

SCENE. A Country Inn.

Timothy. What rooms have you disengaged, Waiter?

Waiter. Why sir, there's the Moon: but I forget—there's a man in that.

Timothy. Eh! A man in the Moon! Oh then we'll not go there.

Waiter. There's the Waterloo Subscription, Sir; that's full—there's the Pope's Head; that's empty, etc., etc.[2]

[1] At the *George Inn*, Winchester, in Elizabeth's reign, the charge for a feather bed for one night was one penny; for a dinner of "Beef, mutton, or pigge," sixpence.

[2] "All at Coventry." By W. T. Montcrieff.

In the minute books of the Grey Coat Hospital, a very valuable religious educational charity, we come across a rather startling entry. On Epiphany, 1698, "After prayers and sermon in church, the children and their parents dined in Hell." Heaven and Hell were two public dining rooms adjoining the old Palace of Westminster, and so named either from the hangings or other pictorial decoration.

CHAPTER V

THE CRAFT GUILDS AND TRADERS' INNS

Of the writing of books about the mediæval guilds there seems to be no end, and each new contribution serves to mystify rather than to throw light on the difficulties of the subject. From the earliest times, it was an inherent tendency of the Teutonic races to combine and form guilds. There were guilds for the building of bridges, for the relief of poor pilgrims, and for almost every imaginable purpose, ranging from the organisation of a municipality to the Saxon "frith-gild," which undertook the punishment of thieves and the exacting of compensation for homicides. As to the craft guilds of the Middle Ages, some are content to regard them as trade unions, others as similar to our modern clubs, and a third class of writers assert that they were purely religious. As a matter of fact, they were capable of becoming all three in turn.

No doubt the original motive of these guilds was to create a monopoly and artificial

control over the particular trade, and also to obtain that security which only an organised association is able to give against tyranny and corruption. They comprised all ranks, wage-earners, manufacturers, and merchants. The weakness of such a body was that there was no community of interests as regards the internal economy of the industry. That is to say, the merchants and masters would not be induced to improve the position of their apprentices or to raise the wages of journeymen. The only common ground would lie in attempts to assert the interests of the trade at large against the whole body of consumers, or against competing trades.

On the other hand, the Corporation itself was originally a guild which had succeeded in obtaining a charter and thus becoming the administrative authority. It would regard with anxiety the creation of other bodies which might follow in its footsteps and become very dangerous rivals. Charters, indeed, were in the twelfth century being bought from the King, which rendered fraternities dependent for their existence on the royal will alone. The weavers of London lived in a quarter by themselves, with their own courts and raised their own taxes,

suffering no intrusion from the City officials. Only by an expensive process of boycotting was this abuse brought to an end. When once the municipalities perceived their danger, they proceeded ruthlessly to reduce the craft guilds into subjection and to limit the purposes for which they were permitted to combine.

And this brings us to the second period in the history of the craft guilds, when we find each trade forming itself into an association to provide a burial fund for its deceased members, masses for the repose of their souls, and to organise a solemn procession and miracle play on the annual festival. Behind the religious association the union for trade purposes remained. When the secular powers of the craft guild were more clearly defined, in the fifteenth century, under the style of a company, the observance of the mystery was often allowed to fall into desuetude. The Companies became mere trustees of the endowments belonging to the religious guilds and treated with equanimity the abolition of these trusts at the Reformation.

In the third period the craft guilds as Companies became a useful adjunct of the

Corporation, protecting the community from overcharges, settling disputes in the trade, and generally forming courts of reference on technical matters. The City companies of to-day, though not under any compulsion to do so, still occasionally render service of a kindred nature. The work of the Plumbers' Company, a few years ago, in arranging for the examination and registration of plumbers will be called to mind; the Apothecaries' Company has also done good service. Out of the guilds of the Holy Trinity at Hull and at Deptford has grown the Corporation of Trinity House, that wealthy philanthropic body that builds lighthouses, licenses pilots, and ministers in various ways to the welfare of our merchant shipping.

At Headcorn and Cranbrook, in the Weald of Kent, and again at Lavenham and Sudbury, in Suffolk, may be seen many beautiful examples of the halls of the craft guilds now derelict and converted to less noble purposes. Part of the *King's Head* at Aylesbury is supposed by experts to have been anciently a Guildhall. We shall refer more fully to this building in another chapter.

We have seen that the guilds afforded

very few advantages to the wage-earners, and according to the natural tendency of all such bodies, they ended in becoming aristocratic and exclusive. They were for a long period masters of the labour of the country, preventing any attempts at strikes, and securing that all disputes as to the rate of pay should be settled by the arbitration of their own warden. Vainly the serving-men of the Saddlers strove to form a guild of their own on the harmless pattern of a religious body with their own festival at Our Lady of Stratford-le-Bow. It was complained of them that in thirteen years their hire had more than doubled the ordinary rate, and their meetings were ruthlessly repressed. The May-Day festival of the Journeymen Shearers in Shrewsbury was suppressed for a similar reason.[1]

Only one refuge remained for the oppressed workmen—the inn, which for centuries was to be the place where he could hold these more or less illegal meetings with his comrades. In the houses of call for artisans, the workers discussed their grievances, hatched conspiracies and strikes, or devised

[1] Green. "Town Life in the Fifteenth Century," II, 126.

less drastic methods for the betterment of their condition. At Kidderminster there is an inn called *The Holy Blaise*, after the patron of weavers; another, *Bishop Blaise*, exists in the heart of the City of London in New Inn Yard. The *Boar's Head*, by the way, was a commonly accepted emblem of St. Blaise.

Bricklayers' Arms, Caxton

Many *St. Crispins* or *Jolly Crispins* survive to represent the shoemaker. St. Hugh was another patron of the shoe trade, and there was once a *St. Hugh's Bones* in Clare Market. *Simon the Tanner* is an old house in Long

Lane, Bermondsey. A later age absurdly renamed inns frequented by the labouring class as *The Weavers' Arms*, *Carpenters' Arms*, *Bricklayers' Arms*, etc., etc. These inns, a common occurrence in every large town, are often of old foundation, and incidentally commemorate the fact that in the public-house it was that the wage-earners first learnt the art of combination for their own betterment. Here the earliest trade unions found a welcome and a home, with which many of their successors are still content. The club room at the inn was the cradle of the Friendly Societies. The Freemasons have given name to a whole series of taverns. All the numerous and generally well managed benefit Societies on the pattern of the Foresters, Hearts of Oak and Oddfellows owe their very existence to the public-house.

It was anciently the custom for workmen to be paid at the nearest inn, and out of this, during the bad period at the beginning of the nineteenth century grew a very serious abuse. Those to whom was entrusted the duty of engaging and paying various forms of precarious and unskilled labour, such as coal whippers and porters, found it profitable to become owners of public-houses where the

unfortunate men were kept waiting for a job which was generally awarded to the individual whose score was the largest. When the men returned from their work they were expected to spend a considerable portion of their earnings for the good of the house. The Truck Act of 1843 put an end to this heartless scandal.

The *Woolpack* and *Fleece* were, of course,

Golden Fleece, South Weald

the signs of inns frequented by the merchants who came to buy wool. At Guildford all the alehouses were at one time required to exhibit

a Woolpack as a token of the leading commodity in the town. There is a very fine old *Golden Fleece Inn* at South Weald in Essex, broad-fronted and roomy, Jacobean in style, but fallen sadly from its old estate since the coach traffic ceased on the Ipswich road.

The *Three Kings* was anciently the sign of the mercers, because in the Middle Ages linen thread materials brought from Cologne had the highest reputation, and were probably stamped either with the figures of the three wise men, or with three crowns. But the *Three Crowns* are asserted to be more commonly emblematic of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. The *Golden Ball* was another mercers' sign, from the arms of Constantinople, which was formerly the centre of the silk trade. The *Elephant and Castle* was the crest of the Cutlers' Company. However, the *Elephant and Castle*, at the corner of Newington Causeway, has a quite different origin. The skeleton of an elephant was discovered while digging a gravel-pit near this spot in 1714. Elephants in mediæval heraldry were invariably represented as carrying a solidly-built castle, a traveller's exaggeration of the Indian palanquin. The *Lion and Castle* indicated a dealer in Spanish wines,

because sherry casks were stamped with the brand of the Spanish arms.

Foresters resorted for company to the *Green Man*, and the survival of many old taverns of that name reminds us that there were numerous forests in the neighbourhood of London. The Northwood, or Norwood, extended from near the *Green Man* at Dulwich to Croydon, where there is another *Green Man Inn*. The *Green Man* at Leytonstone stands on the verge of Epping Forest. Wherever a painted sign exists on one of these houses it generally represents either an archer or a forester clad in Lincoln green.

The *Two Brewers* does not denote that the ale of the two rival tradesmen is on sale, but the manner in which beer was anciently carried about before the invention of brewers' drays. Two porters are shown bearing the precious barrel slung between them on a poles

Last of all to be mentioned among the inn. which remind us of disappearing occupations are those found usually where the ancient green ways join the main roads to London. The drover and his herd of tired wild-eyed cattle is no longer a feature on the roadside. It is cheaper and more convenient to send oxen to market by cattle-train. But the long

green lanes, touching here and there a market town, extend through the Eastern and Midland counties, right up to the North of England. Lonely and deserted, practicable only by the pedestrian or the rider of a sure-footed pony, scarcely ever used except by the county officials, whose duty it is to maintain the right of way, they remain as an ideal hunting ground for the naturalist. When the explorer, tired and hungry after many miles of rough journeying, finds shelter at the *Drover's Call*, *Butcher's Arms*, or *Jolly Drovers*, the purpose of these old half-forgotten by-roads is made clear to him, and he can meditate during his hour of rest on the changes which fifty years have made in the methods of transport.

Porch, Chalk Church, Kent

CHAPTER VI

CHURCH INNS AND CHURCH ALES

We had occasion a year or two ago to visit a small country town where several public-houses were scheduled previous to being closed under the Licensing Act. It was impossible to defend the continuance of the licences. The high road which ran through the lower part of the town was well provided with inns for the passing traveller. These condemned inns, nine or ten in number, were all in a side street leading to the church at the top of the hill. We inquired of a local antiquary, an enthusiast on the subject of inns, whether he could account for the existence of so many in a situation apparently ill-adapted for a prosperous trade, and received a surprising explanation.

"They loved God in those days," muttered the old gentleman, with a sigh of regret, "and loving God each man loved his brother also. In the church they learnt the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; the public-house gave them the opportunity of realising the

Kingdom of Heaven in the practice of brotherly love. It is a survival of the early Christian Agape. 'Exercise hospitality one to another,' says the Apostle—for this is the full meaning of προσλαμβάνεσθαι in Romans xv, 7. In the good old days men did not go into a public-house to drown their wits in gin, but to buy each other good wholesome ale in Christian fellowship. And as every man went to church—of course, there had to be many alehouses!"

We have since discovered a less picturesque though much more plausible origin of these superfluous inns which will be given in another chapter. Nevertheless, allowing for our good friend's flamboyant enthusiasm, there is an element of truth in his contention. Wherever there is a church we may be certain of finding an old inn hard by. In pre-reformation times the Church, while not exactly countenancing the alehouse, looked not sourly on drinking customs when indulged in with discretion. The training of the character in self-restraint is a great ideal of the Catholic Church. The alternation of festival and fast is one integral feature of the process. Fasting alone is insufficient. Continual abstinence results in self-mutilation; the appetite

is merely distorted thereby. It is a great secret of the higher life that where there is no temptation there can be no victory. And so the Church enjoined on our forefathers the duty of feasting heartily and fasting conscientiously each in their due season. A great doctor of the Church gave the maxim that to be fasting after the fifth hour of a holy-day was to be *ipso facto* excommunicate.

Before inns became common the parish clergy were expected to entertain travellers. It must be borne in mind that until the thirteenth century many of the secular priests were married men. The Rolls of Parliament for 1379 contain a complaint that owing to the non-residence of the clergy this duty of affording shelter to benighted wayfarers was in danger of lapsing. In our own boyhood it was still the traditional custom for travellers in remote districts to put up at the rectory, and this may help to account for the unnecessary size of rectories in sparsely populated country parishes. But obviously the unmarried priest of the fifteenth century found it more convenient to all parties when an inn was built on his glebe, where it would be more or less under his control, and he could be answerable for its good conduct.

Again, parishioners from outlying districts were expected on high festivals to attend morning and afternoon services at their mother church. In licensing a chapel at Smallhythe in 1509 " on account of the badness of the roads and the dangers which the inhabitants underwent from the waters being out," Archbishop Warham was careful to stipulate that the people of Smallhythe were not thereby released from their duties at the parish church of Tenterden. Some accommodation was necessary where those coming from a distance could rest and have their midday meal during the interval between High Mass and Vespers. At Lurgashall, in Sussex, there is a very ancient closed porch of wood extending the whole length of the South aisle which local tradition declares to have been built for this express purpose. Perhaps also the large parvise to the west of the tower at Boxley, like in form to the antechapels in the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, was a shelter of this kind. Mr. Baring-Gould thinks that the deep porches in the French cathedrals were intended to shelter the peasants during the midday hours. But by the fifteenth century the increase in the standard of comfort would demand an inn, rather

than these exposed and draughty places for shelter.

Church Ales were a special institution of the mediæval Church to the intent that no parishioner by reason of poverty should lack the means of feasting to his heart's content on the greater holy-days ; all were to assemble and make merry together. "In every parish," says Aubrey, in the introduction to his "Natural History of Wiltshire," there was a Church House, to which belonged spits, crocks, and other utensils for dressing provisions. Here the housekeepers met. The young people were there, too, and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, etc., the ancients sitting gravely by and looking on. All things were civil and without scandal." Whitsuntide was the great feast of early summer before haymaking began, and so these feasts were popularly known as Whitsun-Ales, but Easter and Christmas were not forgotten. From an old Breton legend we learn incidentally that it was customary for the three masses of Christmas to be said consecutively by anticipation, after which all adjourned for a gorgeous feast in the neighbouring Church House. Sometimes two parishes united for the celebration of the Church Ale. In Dodsworth's

manuscripts there is an old indenture preserved, an agreement between the parishioners of Elveston and Okebrook, in Derby-

Church House, Penshurst

shire, to brew four ales, and every ale of one quarter of malt between Easter and the feast of St. John the Baptist; every inhabitant

of the two parishes to attend the several ales. Charitable folks bequeathed funds for the maintenance of these parish banquets on particular festivals.

Just above the western door of Chalk Church, near Gravesend, squats carved in stone a grotesque goblin figure, cross-legged and grinning with a most jovial expression as he grasps a flagon of ale. Charles Dickens in his latter years never omitted to stop and have greeting with this comical old monster. Now, this sculpture commemorates a *give ale*, bequeathed by William May, in 1512, that there should be "every year for his soull, an obit, and to make in bread six bushells of wheat, and in drink ten bushells of malt, and in cheese twenty pence, to give to poor people for the health of his soull."

After the Reformation the Church Ales were continued, chiefly in order that the Churchwardens might by the sale of the liquor secure funds for the repair of the fabric. "There were no rates for the poor in my grandfather's days," says Aubrey. "But for Kingston St. Michael (no small parish) the Church Ale of Whitsuntide did the business." Abuses rapidly crept in. Stubbs, the author of the "Anatomie of Abuses," complains in

1583, that the ales were kept up for six weeks on end, or even longer. In the West of England instances are related of the South aisle of the church being filled with beer casks and men busy supplying all comers. The sale

The Punch Bowl, High Easter

of liquor went on during morning service greatly to the disturbance of the officiating minister. Bishops' injunctions, ecclesiastical canons, and orders of the justices fulminated vainly against the degenerated Church Ales. Not till the time of the Commonwealth were they finally abolished.

Bishop Hobhouse traces the growth of the Church House into a regular tavern at Tintinhull in Somersetshire. First, there was a small bakehouse for the making of the *pain bénit*. In time this had developed into a bakery supplying the whole neighbourhood with bread. From brewing ale for Church festivals, the brewhouse undertook the regular sale of malt liquor; and it was a very profitable business for the churchwardens; so that municipal trading was not quite unknown in the olden time.

The only examples of an undoubted Church House that we have come across are the "Church Loft" at West Wycombe, in Bucks, and the exquisite half-timbered building over the Lych Gate at Penshurst. The *Castle Inn* at Hurst, in Berkshire, is traditionally known as the Church House. The bowling-green behind this inn is one of the best in England and of great antiquity. There are many inns and other old houses near churchyards which probably began their career as Church Houses; the half-timbered "Priest house" at Langdon, in Essex, and the long plastered and tiled tudor structure over the porch at Felstead, opposite the *Swan Inn*, and formerly used as the Grammar School,

may both be of this category. The *Punch Bowl* at High Easter is actually in the churchyard; its interior framing—a marvellous piece of joinery—and the richly-moulded beams show it to have been built at the same

The Punch Bowl, High Easter

time as part of the church, perhaps by the same craftsmen. By the way, Mr. James Stokes, the landlord for many years of the *Punch Bowl*, a worthy, good-hearted man, was in size the nearest rival of Daniel Lambert we ever met. His huge proportions were not by any means due to indolent habits. He

was a thatcher by trade, and noted in the district for his activity and skill.

In the absence of documents it is not easy to discriminate between the Church Inn and the Church House. Old inns near the church bearing ecclesiastical names may be of either origin, or may have served for both. The *Bell* is very common all over England. It is always found near the church, and the sign is of the highest antiquity. Chaucer tells us that the *Tabard* in Southwark was "juste by the Belle." The *Bell* at Finedon, in Northamptonshire, puts in a claim to be one of the very oldest in the country, and the old *Bell Tavern* which formerly stood in King Street, Westminster, is mentioned in the expenses of Sir John Howard, Jockey of Norfolk, in 1466. At the *Bell*, in Warwick Lane, died the good Archbishop Leighton in 1684. "He often used to say that if he were to choose a place to die in, it should be an inn ; it looks like a pilgrim's going home, to whom this world was all as an inn, and who was weary of the noise and confusion in it . . . . And he obtained what he desired." [1]

Not unusual in this situation is a *Lamb Inn*. The *Lamb* at Eastbourne has a small but

[1] "Burnet's Own Times," II, 426.

well-proportioned crypt, vaulted and groined. There is a *Lamb and Flag* near the old parish church at Brighton, Sudbury, and at Swindon; and a *Lamb and Anchor* in Bristol. These owe their origin to a carving of the *Agnus Dei*, but may sometimes point to a house of the Knights Templars, for the *Agnus Dei* appeared on their coat of arms. The *Bleeding Heart* is an emblem of the five sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, and the *Heart*, generally found as the *Golden Heart*, is in honour of the Blessed Virgin. The *Anchor* is suggestive of a church inn, but we have not been able to trace a house bearing this sign to any very remote period. At Hartfield, there is an *Anchor Inn* close to the church, evidently ancient, and having a delightful old-fashioned garden. It was formerly occupied by a church institution where the poor were fed and housed in return for such labour as their age and skill would permit, founded by the Rev. Richard Randes, a rector of the parish some two hundred and fifty years ago. The house contains evidence of having existed long before this date.

At least one church has, by the vicissitudes of time, become an inn; the *George Hotel* at Huntingdon, itself very old and picturesque, enshrines in its cellars and lower walls all that

is left of St. George's Church. The stones of St. Benedict's Church in the same town were used two centuries ago in building the *Barley Mow Inn* at Hartford, and some figures and panelling may be seen in the tap-room of the *Queen's Head*, close by where this church stood. At the *Old Red House*, about four miles north of Newmarket on the road to Brandon, the bar-counter is formed out of the rood-screen turned out of the neighbouring church at a "Restoration" about five-and-twenty years ago.

In a corner of Romford churchyard a fifteenth-century chantry-house, founded by Avery Comburgh, Squire of the Body to Henry VI, and Under-Treasurer to Henry VII, became after the Reformation the *Cock and Bell Inn*. Through the kindness of Messrs. Ind, Coope & Co., the present Bishop of Colchester was enabled to regain possession for religious uses, and after three hundred and sixty years of alienation this building, still possessing its original oak ceiling beams and panelling has been converted into a Church House for the parish, and a hall for meetings, corresponding in style, has now been added from the design of Sir Charles Nicholson, Bart.

Among the pleasantest memories of a pilgrimage to Walsingham, is that of a Sunday spent at a little Suffolk village, where after service Pastor and flock alike adjourned to our inn for a half an hour's gossip. The old custom would be difficult to restore nowadays, but much of the social influence of the Church over the labouring classes was lost when rectors left off occupying, at least once a week, the chair in the village inn parlour. For it is not without good reason that church and inn stand so frequently side by side. Each ministers alike to the natural and common needs of man, and each in its own way has its lesson to teach us in the gospel of the larger life. They have stood together through the ages as a protest against the wayward theories of man-made puritanism; for they belong to the Commandment which is "exceeding broad."

CHAPTER VII

COACHING INNS

A HUNDRED years ago, everybody who had occasion for inland travelling was perforce obliged to use the road; that is, unless he preferred a canal boat or barge, and navigable waters lay in the desired direction. Rich people travelled in their private carriage with four horses which were changed every few miles at the posting-houses. Those without means had to content themselves with carriers' carts or the stage broad-wheeled waggons; a few resorted to dog-carts, then a tiny four-wheeled contrivance actually drawn by dogs. But the great majority of passengers were conveyed in the coaches or mails. In 1825 it was calculated that no less than 10,000 persons were daily on the road in mail-coaches, so closely timed that if a driver were to be ten minutes late in arriving at an important centre many corresponding services would be seriously upset. The average speed, allowing for changing horses, was about ten miles an hour on the fast day coaches.

All this vast organisation had grown up since the time of Queen Elizabeth, when the coach was introduced from France by Fitz-Alan, Earl of Arundel. Only in her old age would this queen leave her horse for the effeminate conveyance, and the Judges continued to ride on horseback to Westminster Hall, almost until the Restoration. In the year 1672, when there were only six stage-coaches in daily running, a Mr. John Cresset, of the Charterhouse, published a pamphlet urging their suppression on the ground that "These stage-coaches make gentlemen come to London on every small occasion, which otherwise they would not do, but upon urgent necessity; nay the convenience of the passage makes their wives often come up, who rather than come such long journeys on horseback would stay at home. Then, when they come to town, they must presently be in the mode, get fine clothes, go to plays and treats, and by these means get such a habit of idleness and love of pleasure, as to make them uneasy ever after."

The coaches started on their journey each morning and evening from great inn yards surrounded by tiers of galleries one above the other. Sometimes, as at the *Bull and*

Mouth in St. Martins le Grand, or the *Oxford Arms* in Warwick Lane, there were four stories of these galleries. It is not easy to trace the various steps by which the plan of the coaching inn was evolved from the "corrall" of migrating tribes, who when resting for the night arranged their waggons in a hollow square, with their cattle in the centre. But the idea underlying the coaching inn was a species of fortress entered only by the great archway with massive doors strongly barred at closing time. The bedchambers of the guests all opened into the galleries overlooking the yard. When an alarm was raised each owner of waggons or cattle in the yard could at once hurry out to the defence of his property. Later on, the traveller would be bound to hear the note of the guard's horn, warning him that the coach in which he had booked a place was preparing to start.

"Heads, heads,—take care of your heads!" is the cry as the Pickwick Club pass on the top of the Rochester coach through the low inn archway. "Terrible place—dangerous work—other day—five children—mother—tall lady eating sandwiches—forgot the arch—crash—knock—children look round—mother's head off—sandwich in her hand—

Yard of White Hart, St. Albans

no mouth to put it in—head of a family off—shocking, shocking!" And it was no invention of the ingenious Mr. Jingle—for the accident actually happened at the *White Hart* at St. Albans.

Just as the coaching system had reached its highest perfection, the railway came and the coach vanished—more suddenly than the horse vehicle has disappeared from the Strand with the advent of the taxi-cab and motor omnibus. The landlord of the coaching inn and the posting-house found his occupation gone almost as abruptly as the guard and driver. Gone are all the coaching inns of London, although their names survive as receiving offices of the railway carriers. In country towns on the main roads, like Sittingbourne or Godalming, huge forlorn wrecks present their face to the roads converted into shops or tenements. Some of them continue to maintain a precarious existence in country villages like Buckden in Huntingdonshire, scarcely visited by the traveller of to-day, whereas seventy years ago their vast size was often insufficient to accommodate the daily arrivals of guests. They linger on in the hope that motorists may bring them a new popularity. Others, tired of empty

rooms and dwindling local trade have retired into private life. At Caxton, on the old North Road, the *George*, a very large inn of a lonely country village, is now a comfortable private residence, and the old gateway arch would hardly be recognized in the French window opening on the front garden.

Coach Gallery at the Bull, Long Melford

Gone are the old galleried yards. We do not know of one complete instance, except the little disused *Coach and Horses* in York Street, Westminster, which is neither large nor beautiful. Fragments of galleries exist at the old

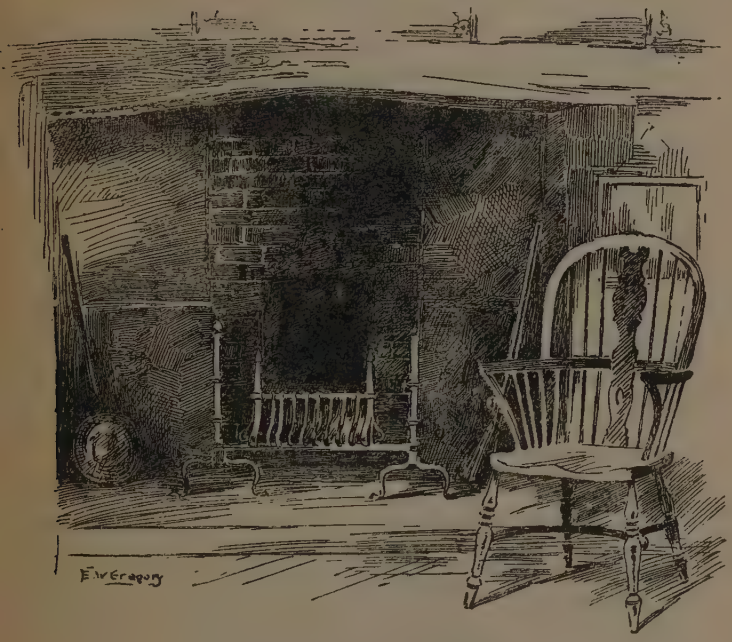
George Inn in the Borough, where they are in several stories ; at the *George* at Huntingdon ; the *Golden Lion* at St. Ives, and the *New Inn* at Gloucester ; but the finest remaining gallery is at the *Bull* at Dartford. The *Bull* at Long Melford owns a glazed gallery, running along the side of the yard next the inn, said to have served to facilitate the loading of luggage on the coaches.

But in provincial towns the coaching inn is not quite left desolate ; it is the place of departure and arrival for the carrier's van. One need only search any local directory to discover the enormous number of these conveyances and the various inns from which they start. The rustic still prefers this method of travel to any other, and if the tourist is not in a hurry the box seat of a carrier's cart is the ideal place from which to study rural affairs. The carrier knows everybody in the district and he is often a dry kind of philosopher, if not an archæologist or naturalist. Win his heart and he will divulge unexpected secrets, besides securing for you the most comfortable night's lodging. His recommendation will prove a passport admitting into every grade of village society.

When the world proves unkind, when the

loneliness and disappointments of life press hard upon you—if Fortune has dealt you a humiliating rebuff—then, if you have a few shillings left, one night spent in an old wayside coaching inn will brace your system up and give you heart to face your troubles once more with a new courage. The world you have left may have despised you. Within the walls of this old hostelry, landlord, waiter, chambermaid, exist only to obey your lightest whim. You are the luminary round which this little world revolves—the "gentleman in the parlour." As Washington Irving so well puts it: "To a homeless man there is a momentary feeling of independence as he stretches himself before an inn fire; the arm-chair is his throne, the poker is his sceptre, and the little parlour his undisputed empire." If you condescend to join the company in the tap-room, still further honour awaits you. Your pronouncements on things temporal or things eternal have acquired an acknowledged value; your opinion is invited and universally deferred to; and the oldest inhabitant will for your special benefit invent a new series of reminiscences. In short, you will feel the truth of all that Dr. Johnson has laid down on the subject: "At a tavern

there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome ; and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are.



The White Hart, Witham

No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospects of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, sir ; there is

nothing which has been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn."

A few minutes' gossip with the landlord after closing time, and you sink to rest in the depth of a feather bed, which removes the last vestiges of the care that has beset you. Early in the morning you rise refreshed and vigorous, ready after a walk round the old-fashioned garden to devour unlimited supplies of ham and eggs washed down by coffee. It is only in real old coaching inns that they possess the secret of brewing old English coffee—a beverage that owes nothing to the poisonous intoxicating berry of Arabia, discovered by the brothers Shirley. We believe it is manufactured by roasting and grinding some species of scarlet runner. As a breakfast drink it is unequalled. This coffee is the last of a series of exhilarating experiences before you go your way rejoicing and awake to all the graces of life. The bill will not be exorbitant—that is, if you have been reasonable in your demands—and the landlord contemplates with pleasure your return on a future occasion.

We love the coaching inn, not only as the home of practical good cheer, but for the

romantic memories that cling to it. Scarcely one of them but has its story of the eloping couple, whose chaise slipped out at the back gate just as the heroine's father alighted to make inquiries at the front door; the details vary, but the lovers always escape in the nick of time with the connivance of Boniface. In a corner of the gallery of one old inn near Huntingdon, a narrow door is shown, fitting so exactly that when closed no person except those in the secret could trace it. Here some Dick Turpin or Claude Duval might lie in wait and peep over the balcony to choose his prey among the passengers stopping for the night; or find safe hiding from the Bow Street runners. Romance easily gathered around the journey by coach. Whereas a railway acquaintance ends when the passengers each go his or her own way from the arrival platform, the companions on the coach-top met again in the coffee-room, and might renew their intimacy at breakfast next morning. Between London and York there was ample time and opportunity for any suitable young couple to arrive at a good understanding with one another.

None of the coaching inns had a more remarkable history than the *Castle Inn* at

Marlborough. Built by Francis, Lord Seymour, in the reign of Charles II from the reputed designs of Webb, Inigo Jones' pupil and son-in-law, this sumptuous manor-house was the favourite residence of the Seymour family. During its occupation by Frances, Countess of Hertford, and afterwards Duchess of Somerset, in the early years of the eighteenth century, many of the leading wits and scholars of the age were invited here. Dr. Watts, the hymn-writer, James Thomson, author of "The Seasons," and Elizabeth Rowe are all said to have composed their lays in the grottoes and extravagantly-arranged gardens. When the house passed by marriage into the hands of the Northumberland family it was neglected as a superfluous residence, and at last was let on lease as an inn to a Mr. Cotterell. It was a broad-fronted stately mansion, the most splendid and best appointed hotel in England during that age. Before the grand portico no less than forty coaches changed horses every day. The service was magnificent. A dinner of twenty-two covers could, if necessary, be served up on silver.

The great Lord Chatham once stayed several weeks at the *Castle Inn*. He was detained

there on his way back to London from Bath, by a relapse of gout. His own suite demanded twenty rooms, and the exigencies of State during that time strained the resources of the hotel to the utmost. He required the whole staff, waiters, ostlers and boot-boys to wear his livery. Mr. Stanley Weyman has seized on just this critical moment, and has woven round the *Castle Inn* the sweetest and most enthralling of his many novels.

Other romances of real life are associated with it. Driving through Marlborough and halting at the *Castle Inn*, a certain Duke of Chandos heard screams in the inn-yard. Hastening to the spot he found a beautiful girl being brutally beaten by an ostler. When the Duke interfered, the ostler declared that the young woman was his wife, and therefore that he had an indefeasible right to beat her. However, he was willing to compromise the matter by selling his wife for £20. The Duke paid the money, took the young woman away, and, so we are told, afterwards made her Duchess of Chandos.

Water has continued to flow under the bridge that spans the Kennett for many generations since Sir George Soane sat on the parapet and wooed Julia, the college porter's

daughter. The old Bath Road knows no more the coaches, curricles, wigs and hoops, holstered saddles or the beaux and fine ladies, and gentleman's gentlemen whose environment they were. We drift half-unconsciously into the language of the novelist who

Old Coaching Inns, St Albans

has recalled these old days so vividly. The *Castle Inn* is now part of Marlborough College, founded in 1843. The *Rose Inn* at Wokingham has been refronted since " With pluvial patter for refrain," Gay, Pope, Swift and

Arbuthnot spent a rainy afternoon there vying their verses in praise of Molly Moy, the fair daughter of their host, who in spite of her beauty lived to be an old maid of seventy. Yet the wayfarer will discover that innkeeper's daughters are as pretty as they were in the days gone by. Romance is not the exclusive property of any one generation. Where youth and beauty are to be found there lurks the romance; and it belongs as much to the inns of our own time as when highwaymen, patches, puffs, wigs, and knee breeches were the prevailing fashion.

Botolph's Bridge Inn, Romney Marsh

CHAPTER VIII

WAYSIDE INNS AND ALEHOUSES

We have shown in previous chapters how the old English inn grew up almost always under some local authority—either the lord of the manor, the monastery, or the parish—and its conduct was regulated by legal enactments from the reign of Henry II onwards. The alehouse, on the contrary, might conduct its business as its owner pleased, subject only to the natural laws of supply and demand. Every householder was free to brew either for his own consumption or for sale, the one condition being that his liquor was wholesome and good. Among the crimes that incurred the punishment of the ducking-stool in the city of Chester during Saxon times was that of brewing bad beer.

In every manor there was held annually the assize of bread and ale, the two staple articles of diet which it was essential should be pure and of good quality. "Bread, the staff of life, and beer life itself," not unknown as a motto on the signboards, is a saying that

has come down to us from a prehistoric period. And modern science, as it seems, is inclined to endorse the maxim. Good old-fashioned wheaten and rye bread, made from the whole flour from which only the coarser brans had been sifted, built up the stamina of our forefathers. Their chief drink was ale brewed from barley or oaten malt. The small proportion of alcohol served as a vehicle for the organic phosphates necessary for the sustenance of strong nerves, while the ferment of the malt helped to digest the starch granules in the bread. Bread and ale are still the main diet of our labouring classes—but alas! stale, finely-sifted flour contains a very poor allowance of gluten, and chemically produced saccharine is destitute of phosphates. O, that our modern legislators would revive the assize of bread and ale!

In *Arnold's Chronicle*, published by Pynson about 1521, the following receipt for making beer is given: "Ten quarters of malt, two quarters of wheat, two quarters of oats and eleven poundes of hoppys, to make eleven barrels of single beer." Hops only came into use about the reign of Henry VII; previously ivy berries, heath or spice had been used as a flavouring for ale. Leonard Maskall,

of Plumpton, a writer on gardening in the reign of Henry VIII, has the credit of acclimatising the hop-plant. He is also said to have first introduced carp in the moat at Plumpton Place. Hence the rhyme of which many versions are given:

> "Hops, heresy, carp and beer,
> Came into England all in one year."

However, hops are mentioned as an adulterant in ale in a statute of Henry VI; and about the same time mention of beer occurs in the accounts of Syon Nunnery, which were kept in English.

Every inn, large or small, once possessed its own brewhouse, and although wholesale breweries were established about the time of the Flemish immigration, at the end of the fourteenth century, home-brewed ale was commonly on draught fifty or sixty years ago. The *White Horse* at Pleshy, that village that boasts of knowing neither a teetotaller nor a drunkard, relied entirely on its home-brewed liquors up to within the last ten years, and the apparatus wherein they were prepared remains for the student of old methods to examine.

Home-brewed ale is still more commonly to be met with in some districts than many

suppose. Even in the neighbourhood of the greatest brewery town in the world, Burton-on-Trent, there are small inns which rely upon their own brewing for the best of their ale. There is a very old brewhouse at Derby,

White Horse, Pleshy

at the *Nottingham Castle Inn*, into which any passer-by may step from the street and see, twice a week, a huge cauldron containing about a hundred and twenty gallons, bubbling and foaming in the corner. This brewhouse dates from the sixteenth century, and is one

of the oldest buildings in the town; the *Dolphin*, whose licence dates from 1530, being another and perhaps older inn in the same neighbourhood.

A legion of brewers are named in Domesday Book, mostly women, and manorial assizes show a preponderance of the fairer sex. The price of bread and ale was fixed by statute in Henry III's reign, and it was the business of the Ale-tester to see that the measures were of standard capacity and stamped with some recognized official mark. Alehouses abounded everywhere, known by a long pole surmounted by a tuft of foliage. An Act of 1375 regulates the length of the ale-stake at not more than seven feet over the public way. The poles had a tendency to become over long to the deterioration of the timber structures from which they depended, as well as danger to travellers passing on horseback. At Guildford, and some other cloth centres, the alehouses were required to exhibit a woolpack for a sign.

These alehouses were of all sorts and sizes. There was the humble hedgeside cottage, looking like a mere sentry-box, illustrated in the fourteenth century MS.[1], where a hermit

[1] MS. 10. E. IV.

is being entertained by an alewife with a very large beer jug; or the little alehouse on the Watling Street, somewhere near Rainham, where Chaucer's Pardoner dismounted to

"Drynke and byten on a cake"

before commencing his tale; or the establishment by Leatherhead Bridge, where Elinour Rummyng drove such a thriving trade, immortalised by the poet Skelton. Some of these larger alehouses were a cause of anxiety to well-disposed people, and no doubt the Church Houses were partly instituted with the idea of inducing the faithful to spend their time in a less disreputable manner. All kinds of bad characters resorted to the alehouse. Piers Plowman gives us a lurid picture of what went on there. How the glutton going to be shriven met the alewife and was induced to spend the afternoon and evening with

"Tymme the tynkere and tweyne of his prentis
Hikke the hakeneyman and Hughe the nedeler,
Clarice of cokkeslane, and the clerke of the Cherche
Dawe the dykere and a doziene other;
Sir Piers of Pridie and Peronelle of Flanders,
A ribidour, a ratonere, a rakyer of Chepe,
A ropere, a redynkyng, and Rose the disheres,
Gofrey of Garlekehithe, and Gryfin the Walshe,
And upholderes an hepe."

They drink deeply, joke coarsely and quarrels ensue.

Finally the glutton is hopelessly intoxicated.

"He myghte neither steppe ne stande, er his staffe hadde;
And thanne gan he go, liche a glewmannes biche,
Somme tyme aside, and somme tyme arrere,
As who-so leyth lynes for to lache foules."

His wife and maid carry him home between them and he lies helpless through Saturday and Sunday, waking in bitter repentance at having missed his duties.[1]

From Skelton we learn how women came to pledge their wedding rings and husbands' clothes

"Because the ale is good."

Hence the necessity for an Act in Henry VII's reign which empowered justices to close alehouses notorious for bad conduct, and later, the first Licensing Act of 1552, requiring every alehouse-keeper to obtain the licence of two justices, and regulating the manner in which the business is to be carried on. By an Act of 1627, a fine of twenty-one shillings, or in default a whipping, was inflicted on the keepers of unlicensed alehouses, and on a second conviction imprisonment for one month. But none of these measures were enforced throughout the country, and they were easily

[1] "Piers the Plowman." Text B., Passus V.; Text C., Passus VII.

evaded. Anyone was still free to sell ale in booths at fair time, and many trades had by custom the privilege to sell ale as a part of their business : for example, barbers and blacksmiths, whose customers required entertainment while waiting their turn. Two centuries after the first Licensing Act, the nation was still unconvinced on the subject of free trade in liquor. In a report on an inquiry made by Justices of the Peace for the County of Middlesex in 1736, it was shown that within the limits of Westminster, Holborn, The Tower and Finsbury (exclusive of London and Southwark), there were no less than 2,105 unlicensed houses. Spirits were retailed by above eighty other trades, particularly chandlers, weavers, tobacconists, shoemakers, carpenters, barbers, tailors, dyers, etc.

Barbers' shops were once resorted to by idlers, in order to pass away their time, and a system of forfeits prevailed, nominally to enforce order, but in practice to promote the sale of drink. They are referred to in " Measure for Measure."

> " Laws for all faults,
> But laws so countenanced that the strong statutes
> Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop
> As much in mock as mark."

Dr. Kenrick professes to have copied the following list of forfeits in a shop near Northallerton :

" RULES FOR SEEMLY BEHAVIOUR

First come, first served—then come not late ;
And when arrived keep your state ;
For he who from these rules shall swerve
Must pay the forfeits—so observe."

1.

Who enters here with boots and spurs,
Must keep his nook ; for if he stirs,
And gives with armed heel a kick,
A pint he pays for every prick.

2.

Who rudely takes another's turn,
A forfeit mug may manners learn.

3.

Who reverentless shall swear or curse,
Must lug seven farthings from his purse.

4.

Who checks the barber in his tale,
Must pay for each a pot of ale.

5.

Who will or cannot miss his hat
While trimming, pays a pint for that.

6.

And he who can or will not pay,
Shall hence be sent half trimm'd away,
For will he, nill he, if in fault,
He forfeit must in meal or malt.
But mark who is already in drink,
The cannikin must never clink."

The Chequers, Doddington

As the restrictions on travelling gradually disappeared many of the alehouses developed into inns. As early as 1349, a statute of Edward III, requiring those who entertained travellers to be content with moderate prices, recognizes the class of *Herbergers*[1] or keepers of unlicensed hostelries. And these inns as a class are deserving of close study from the difficult problem of determining their exact age. Some of them may have existed as alehouses during the Saxon period; some may even stand on the sites of Roman *tabernae*.

The oldest of all inn signs of this class is the *Chequers*, found throughout England, but especially in the neighbourhood of old Roman roads. This sign is found on many houses at Pompeii, and was throughout Europe the common indication of a money-changer's office. Hence our Court of the Exchequer, which concerned itself with the national funds and their collection. The chess-board was the most primitive form of ready reckoner; and as the innkeeper was the person best qualified to act as money-changer he readily undertook the business. Small tradesmen

[1] Literally "Harbourers." Compare the French *Auberge*.

still send their assistants to the public-house when they require to change a sovereign. Many heraldic shields are painted with checks, and Brand, in his "Popular Antiquities," suggested that the Chequers represent the

The Chequers, Redbourne

coat of arms of the Earls of Warrenne, on the supposition that a member of this family in the reign of Edward IV possessed the exclusive right of granting licences. It is absolutely certain that no such licence was ever authorised. Nothing of the kind was ever attempted before Sir Giles Mompesson in the reign of James I; but, of course, some "chequers" may possibly have a heraldic origin.

Chaucer's pilgrims put up at the *Chequers on the Hope* (*i.e.*, on the Hoop) at Canterbury,

and part of this inn still remains near the Cathedral gate. There was also a *Chequers Inn* at St. Albans, but it has now ceased to exist. Either may have stood on the sites of Roman inns; but with these as with the thatched *Chequers* on the Watling Street, near Redbourne, or the *Chequers* at Loose or Doddington, speculation is vain. Like the needy knife-grinder, whose breeches were so woefully torn during his drinking bout at an inn bearing the same name: "Story? God bless you, I have none to tell, sir!" is the universal answer to all our inquiries for any historical particulars beyond a century or two back.

Wayside inns needed no licence and were usually carried on by a hosteller who combined the occupation with that of farmer or tradesman of some kind. Where any old leases exist they are described merely as tenements or farms. Thus the *Dorset Arms* at Withyham, a very picturesque old shingled and barge-boarded inn, appears as "Somers' Farm." Only by accident do we find the name of one of the tenants, William Pigott, on a list of Sussex tavern-keepers in the year 1636.

When the sign of the *Three Horseshoes* occurs at the end of a rough difficult stretch of road during which a horse would often lose

a shoe, it is probable that the inn grew up side by side with a blacksmith's business, even when the smithy no longer exists. In a very lonely and exposed situation on the Ermine Street, where the road to St. Ives

The Three Horseshoes near Papworth Everard

crosses near Papworth Everard, there is a thatched inn bearing this sign and also known as *Kisby's Hut.* At Lickfold, about six miles from Haslemere, almost under the shadow of Black Down, the highest hill in Sussex, there is a cosy half-timbered *Three Horseshoes,* which has come down to our time practically unaltered since the day of its erection in 1642, and it is well worth examination. The roads around it are liable to be flooded, and it is a likely place for waggoners to pull up for repairs. But when disentangling the riddles

of local history, we must not be led astray with obvious explanations. Many old coats of arms contain the three horseshoes. Indeed there is one inn on a manor once belonging to the Shelleys, where possibly the forgotten shield of the older Kentish branch of the

The Horseshoes, Lickfold

family — the three escallops — has been repainted as three horseshoes.

The *Plough* and *Harrow* are both primitive emblems, and agricultural signs such as these point to a very high antiquity. The *Plough* at Kingsbury is supposed to be more than eight hundred years old.

At the Upper Dicker in Sussex there is an inn called the *Plough*, which is worth visiting by motorists on their way to the *Star* at

Alfriston, especially as it will enable them to get a glimpse of Michelham Priory on an island in the Cuckmere close by. The tap-room of this inn has a generously-planned fireplace with an ancient fireback and dogs. Up till quite recently it was the custom to keep a fire constantly burning, and in the hottest weather the warmth of this fire was far from unwelcome owing to the thickness of the outer walls. This tradition of the ever-burning fire is a curious one, found in remote districts, and pointing to a time when the public-house was necessarily resorted to for purposes of this kind. At the *Chequers Inn*, Slapestones, near Osmotherly, in Yorkshire, the hearth-fire has been burning uninterruptedly for at least a hundred and thirty years.

Some inns now known as the *Ship* were possibly at one time the "Sheep," as will be readily understood by those acquainted with rustic dialect. *Shepherd and Crook*, *Load of Hay*, *Woodman*, are all to be found in rural districts throughout England. The *Wheatsheaf*, whether it surmounts a fine old coaching house in a market town, or a little wayside inn far from the madding crowd, reminds us that we once could boast of the finest wheat

culture in the world ; while the *Harvest Home* pleasantly recalls the merry-making which concluded the ingathering of the crops.

In some country villages there are a very large number of small inns close together, perhaps three in a row. At Steeple Ashton, in Oxfordshire, there are thirteen, and at East Ilsley, in Berkshire, nearly as many to a population of about five hundred. The street seems almost to consist of public-houses. But it would be quite wrong to suppose that the inhabitants of these districts are unduly given to convivial habits. The reports of the petty sessions show that drunkenness is exceedingly rare. In Steeple Ashton division no charge of drunkenness has been heard for the past six years. Such villages are decayed market towns, which become important at the time of their periodical sheep fairs, when an army of graziers and shepherds from the distant downs must find board and lodging. For a week these inns are crowded with dealers in velveteen jackets, and grizzled veterans clad in those blue smock coats and slouched hats, which were once the universal dress of village labourers, with a shaggy bob-tail dog under every chair. When fair-time is over they are quite deserted.

CHAPTER IX

HISTORIC SIGNS AND HISTORIC INNS

"THE Greeks honoured their great men and successful commanders by erecting statues to them," remarks Jacob Larwood; "modern nations make the portraits of their celebrities serve as signs for public-houses."[1] Certainly it would be possible to make the signboards on the inns serve as texts for a complete history of England. There was once even a *Cæsar's Head* in Great Palace Yard; and King Alfred and Canute are still commemorated at Wantage and at Southampton; while the *King Edgar Inn* at Chester, represents on its sign that monarch being rowed in a wherry down the river Dee by eight tributary kings. But for authentic and ancient historical signs we must not refer to any earlier period than the reign of Edward III, when inns began to be built in large numbers.

Many *Red Lion* inns date from this reign. The red lion was the badge of John of Gaunt,

[1] "History of Signboards," II, 45.

married to Constance, daughter of Don Pedro the Cruel, King of Leon and Castille.

Red Lion, Wingham

On the other hand, John of Gaunt was the leader of an unpopular and reactionary party, not likely to commend itself to the innkeeper. The *Red Lion* at Wingham, containing an old

court-room and some curious and beautifully carved oaken beams, ceilings and kings-posts, is declared by experts to date from 1320. In this case it is more probable that the red lion of Scotland, conquered by Edward I, is commemorated. A landlord of the *Red Lion* at Sittingbourne, in 1820, advertised his establishment as "Remarkable for an entertainment made by Mr. John Norwood for King Henry V, as he returned from the Battle of Agincourt, in France, in the year 1415, the whole amounting to no more than nine shillings and ninepence, wine being at that time only a penny a pint, and all other things proportionately cheap." The *Red Lion* at Speldhurst, near Tunbridge Wells, was discovered by the investigations of the late Mr. Morris in the Inland Revenue to have possessed a licence in 1415.

Not all *Red Lion* inns, however, date from the fourteenth century, for this was also said to be the favourite badge of Cardinal Wolsey. At Hampton-on-Thames the *Red Lion* came into existence when that great statesman was building Hampton Court Palace, and served to lodge the better class of craftsmen engaged in the work. After being for centuries a favourite meeting-place for the Royal Chase,

it became a resort for literary and dramatic folk, Dryden, Pope, Colley Cibber, Addison, Quinn, and Kitty Clive being among the names associated with the house. In the early part of the nineteenth century it was famous for its tulip feasts which drew the tulip fanciers of the world to Hampton. In 1908 the charming old Tudor structure was condemned to make way for a street-widening scheme, and its last appearance was as the background to a cinematograph picture, in which the house suddenly burst into flames, frenzied occupants appeared at the windows, the heroes of the local fire brigade flew to the rescue in the nick of time, and the fire was put out in the most approved manner.

At Walsingham there is a large inn containing remains of fourteenth-century work, called the *Black Lion*. Perhaps it takes its name from the arms of Queen Philippa, of Hainault, who came hither with her husband, Edward III, in 1361, to offer thanks for the happy conclusion of the French Wars after the treaty of Bretigny. But both *Black Lion* and *Golden Lion* may occasionally refer to the lions of Flanders and be marks of the great immigration of Flemish weavers, ironfounders

and brewers during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The *Swan* was a favourite emblem with many of our kings, its first mention being in

The Swan, Sutton Valence

the "Vow of the Swan," when Edward I swore to take vengeance on Scotland for the murder of Comyn. On the signboards it must generally be ascribed to Henry IV. With Henry V and VI, the antelope is the heraldic emblem; there is an old half-timbered *Antelope* opposite the Market House at

Godalming, but it has recently been re-named the *White Hart*. At Bristol and at Guildford are *White Lion* inns, probably in honour of Edward IV, whose arms have for supporters the *White Lion* and the *Black Bull* of the house of Clarence.

Richard III reigned for too short a span to provide us with many *White Boars*, and the few that existed hastened after his death to change their names to that of the *Blue Boar ;* a coat of blue paint was a cheap way of converting the *White Boar* of the fallen monarch into the *Blue Boar* of the Earl of Oxford, whose influence had contributed very largely to place Henry Tudor on the throne. It was at the *Blue Boar* at Leicester, that Richard III slept just before the battle of Bosworth. A large richly carved and gilded four-post bedstead was long preserved there and shown to sightseers as the bed which he occupied. In the time of Elizabeth, a Mr. Clarke, who kept the house, accidentally discovered a huge store of gold coins of the reign of Richard III, underneath the planks of the bedstead. He concealed his good fortune and thus from a poor condition he became rich, but this ill-gotten wealth brought a curse in its train. A maid-servant plotted with seven ruffians to

rob the inn. Mrs. Clarke, interrupting them at their work, was strangled by the maid-servant, who was sentenced to be drawn and burnt, and her seven accomplices were hanged in the Market Place at Leicester in 1613.

Another sign which disappeared utterly after the Battle of Bosworth, was the *White Rose;* but the *Red Rose of Lancaster* is not uncommon at the present time in the County Palatine. The *Rose and Crown*, or *Rose and Portcullis*, are the royal signs of Henry VII's reign. But as the *Rose* was in mediæval times regarded as an emblem of Our Lady, "Rosa Mystica," besides being a national emblem, the numerous *Rose* inns must not be attributed to this period without more positive historical evidence. Such doubts are not likely to arise with regard to the *King's Head*, a sign nearly always adorned with a lifelike portrait of bluff King Harry. Many of these houses are old monastic or collegiate property, whose lessees were anxious by the change of sign, to acknowledge their acceptance of the situation. It is not necessary to fare a long distance from town to find an old *King's Head*. In the village of Roehampton, a short mile from Putney, the much married monarch

may still be recognized on the battered, faded signboard hanging over an obelisk-shaped post in front of the long low inn, faced with shingles. Within the house are many

King's Head, Roehampton

quaint low-ceilinged rooms and some curious relics.

"Good Queen Bess," either by portrait or bust, is associated with the *Queen's Head*, although in this case painter or modeller had to be careful, as the Virgin Queen was exceedingly particular. If her effigy proved to be

uncomely, or not lifelike in her opinion, it was liable to destruction and the perpetrator to suffer from her serious displeasure. A proclamation of 1563, complains that "a grete number of her loving subjects are much greved and to take grete offence with the errors and deformities allredy committed by sondry persons in this behalf," and orders that means be taken to "prohibit the shewing and publication of such as are apparently deformed, until they may be reformed which are reformable," Many of the *Queen's Head* inns may owe their origin to Sir Walter Raleigh, who, in the thirtieth year of that reign obtained a patent "to make licence for keeping of taverns and retailing of wines through England." The *Queen's Head* at Islington, a noble structure with an elaborately-carved front and richly ornamented ceilings, has always been connected traditionally with Sir Walter. Either in this house, or at the *Old Pied Bull* close by, occurred that amusing episode in the early history of tobacco smoking. His servant, happening to be carrying in a pail of water, observed to his horror clouds of smoke issuing from Raleigh's mouth, and imagining him to be on fire, with admirable presence of mind poured the liquid in a deluge over the

knight.[1] Both inns have unfortunately been pulled down.

With James I, the arms of England and Scotland were united, and the Unicorn appears for the first time. There are many *Unicorn* inns in the South of England; but the fabulous beast was also a sign used by apothecaries, possibly because the horn (really that of the Narwhal) was supposed to detect the presence of poison. Albertus Magnus mentions (without endorsing) a belief current in his time that knife-handles made of this substance would sweat, if poison was brought into the room. Fuller was more credulous.

Charles I took refuge at the *Unicorn Inn* at Weobly, in Herefordshire, on September 5th, 1645, and this inn was afterwards called the *Crown*. It is now a private house.

Royal Oaks are everywhere in memory of the Boscobel Oak, and the accession of Charles II. *Oliver Cromwell*, who had usurped the *Rose and Crown* in High Street, Knightsbridge, was dethroned once more to make room for the reinstatement of the old sign. Coming nearer to our own time the *Brunswick*

[1] Charles Lamb, who delighted in the old *Queen's Head*, suggests that the liquid was not water but "Black Jack."

inns hail the succession of the house of Brunswick to the English Crown. George III and George IV appear occasionally, but not so frequently as William IV, our Sailor King. Queen Victoria's popularity is shown by the hundreds of *Victoria, Island Queen, Empress* and *Jubilee* inns. Since the coronation of our late gracious sovereign, King Edward VII, the duties of the justices have involved the closing of old houses rather than the licensing of new ones. So that it is unlikely that future generations will be able to realise the esteem and regard of his subjects by any large number of *Edward VII* inns. However, there will be a considerable array of *Royal Alberts* and *Prince of Wales* signboards to indicate this nation's good feeling towards him when he was heir apparent to the throne; the same remark will apply with regard to the *Princess Alexandra* and *Rose of Denmark.*

We have by no means exhausted the list of royal emblems. Some *Falcon* inns may have taken their title from the badge of the Dukes of York; but this was not invariably the case, when in districts where hawking was a popular sport. The *Falcon Hotel*, near Clapham Junction, owes its name to the river Falcon, once a considerable stream, but now

only permitted to flow through Battersea underground. The "Gun" was a Tudor sign, and the *Gun Inn* at Dorking, evidently dates from the reign of Edward VI. Edward III quartered the French arms with the English; the practice was continued by his successors and may have originated the *Fleur de Lis* or *Flower de Luce* inns, where none of the local families bear this charge on their shields. Mention of the *Fleur de Lis* at Faversham is the one piece of local colouring in the "Tragedy of Arden of Faversham," formerly attributed to Shakespeare. The *Three Frogs*, near Wokingham, is, perhaps, a version of the arms of France; before the *entente cordiale* it used to be a theory widely current among patriotic Britons that the *fleur de lis* really was intended for a heraldic representation of a frog.

Occasionally members of noble families have attained to such distinction that their crests have been utilized for inn signs far beyond the limits of their estates. The *Bear and Ragged Staff* was the crest of the Earls of Warwick; but it attained to notoriety after its adoption by the rapacious Dudleys. Robert Dudley, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, discarded the Green Lion, his own

emblem, for the Bear and Ragged Staff of his mother, the last heiress of the Warwick family. His fourth son, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, a favourite of Queen Elizabeth, inherited the manor at Cumnor, an old possession of Abingdon Abbey. The *Bear and Ragged Staff* at Cumnor, and its landlord at that period, Giles Gosling, are described in Sir Walter Scott's novel, "Kenilworth," wherein is also related the tragic fate of Dudley's unhappy countess, Amy Robsart. Old pictures show this inn down to the middle of the last century as retaining its thatched roof and rustic primitive appearance. On the signboard was the name of the licensee, with the addition, "late Giles Gosling."

The *Eagle and Child* was the crest of the Earls of Derby, the *Maiden Head*, of the Dukes of Buckingham, and the *White Bear*, that of the Earls of Kent. A still more frequent sign in the home counties, the *Grasshopper*, shows the popularity of the great Sir Thomas Gresham, to whom we owe the Royal Exchange and many other great City institutions. Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Francis Walsingham, both Elizabethan statesmen of eminence, gave us respectively the *Hind* and the *Tiger's Head*. For the *Saracen's*

Head there will be various claimants, according to locality, so many crusaders having adopted this charge; but a few innkeepers of Lollard sympathies possibly adopted the sign out of compliment to Sir John Oldcastle. Bagford informs us that the *Pelican* was the badge of Lord Cromwell, the despoiler of monasteries, who also stole this emblem from the Church. At Speen, near Newbury, there was a coaching inn on the Bath Road, which provoked an epigram:

"The famous house at Speenhamland,
That stands upon the hill,
May well be called the Pelican,
From its enormous bill."

Coming to the ballad heroes, *Guy of Warwick* and the *Dun Cow* slain by him are found all through the Midlands; but they cannot compare for popularity with *Robin Hood*, who is usually accompanied by *Little John* on the signboard. This is not a result of the modern taste for romantic literature. The *Robin Hood* is mentioned as a common alehouse sign by Samuel Rowlands in "Martin Mark-all, Beadle of Bridewell," published in 1610. All the world loved Robin Hood, and cherished his memory as a jolly good-natured outlaw, manly and fearless, generous to the poor and careful for the honour of womenkind.

Robin Hood alone among the revolutionary spirits of the Middle Ages has a place on the signboards, although Wat Tyler is remembered in connection with the *Crown Inn* at Dartford, and *Jack Straw's Castle* was until lately a great resort for holiday-makers on Hampstead Heath. *King James and the Tinker* inn at Enfield, which claims on doubtful authority to be over a thousand years old, is associated with another ballad story of which there are many versions, such as "King Henry and the Miller of Mansfield," or "King John and the Miller of Charlton." In one of these tales our old friend, the Vicar of Bray, was dining at the *Bear* at Maidenhead with some friends. The party had taxed all the resources of the hotel, and when a stranger tired and hungry asked for refreshments, the vicar only admitted him to table very grudgingly. At the end of the meal the stranger discovered that he had left his purse behind him, and was roundly abused by the dignitary. However, his curate pleaded that the merry quips and anecdotes of the guest deserved consideration; he had proved himself a good fellow and had earned his dinner. At this moment some members of the royal staff enter, and the guest turns out

to be nothing less than his Majesty James I. So the churlish vicar undergoes much discomfiture, and the curate receives the reward of high preferment.

Outbursts of patriotism are a feature on the signboards. Great victories of the British forces by land and sea, and the great military and naval heroes have all been commemorated in their turn, beginning with the *Crispin and Crispinian*, which greeted the troops of Henry V, as they returned along the old Watling Street, after Agincourt (which was fought on the feast day of these twin saints).

> " Crispin Crispian shall never go by
> From this day to the ending of the world,
> But we in it shall be remembered."
>
> " Henry V," IV, 3.

The *Bull and Mouth* is said to be a corruption of Boulogne Mouth, captured by Henry VIII. *Bull and Gate* may possibly be a similar vulgarism for Boulogne Gate. We might draw up a complete sequence of great battles fought and fortresses taken during the last three centuries, but those most frequently met with are *Gibraltar*, *Waterloo*, *Battle of the Nile*, and *Trafalgar*. Admirals range from *Blake* to *Napier*, generals from *Marlborough* to *Wolseley*. Not one of them is forgotten, though *Wellington*, *Nelson* and *Keppel* can

probably claim the largest number of adherents. The *Marquis of Granby*, almost forgotten by the ordinary reader of history, enjoyed a remarkable popularity in his own day, if we are to judge by the number of portraits of this high-spirited and courageous nobleman which hang outside public-houses. The original of Mr. Tony Weller's *Marquis of Granby* is, we believe, the one at Epsom, "Quite a model of a roadside public-house of the better class—just large enough to be convenient, and small enough to be snug." The sign portrayed "the head and shoulders of a gentleman with an apoplectic countenance, in a red coat with blue facings, and a touch of the same blue over his three-cornered hat, for a sky. Over that again were a pair of flags; beneath the last button of his coat were a couple of cannon; and the whole formed an expressive and undoubted likeness of the Marquis of Granby of glorious memory."

But the heart of the nation was most deeply touched by the mingled triumph and pathos at Trafalgar. *Lord Nelson*, *Victory*, and *Trafalgar*, greet us on every high road that leads down to the sea, in the neighbourhood of every harbour or dock, and beside the quays on every navigable river. And it is

surprising how many of these *Nelson* inns are buildings three or four centuries old, showing that the innkeeper was prepared to sacrifice

The Nelson, Maidstone

the sign under which he had hitherto done business and trusted to make a new reputation under the ægis of the popular hero. We have discovered several *Nelson* inns of this

type in Kent, though none which we recall with more pleasure than the quaint many-gabled wooden structure with a considerable list to starboard on the high path by the riverside at Maidstone. Its ways are homely but hearty; the same family have remained in possession for a period rapidly approaching the century; and almost every article of furniture is old-fashioned and curious.

The public-house has been described as "the forum of the English." We may sneer at pot-house politics, but it is only in the tavern, the haven of free speech, that the burning questions of the day can be discussed with freedom and sincerity. Washington Irving called the inn "the temple of true liberty." The *Punch Bowl* was a Whig sign, because that party preferred that beverage (possibly because it was favoured by Fox), whereas the Tories remained faithful to old-fashioned drinks like claret and sack. Most of the political idols obtaining a recognition over the tavern door have been champions of reform, such as *John Wilkes*, *Sir Francis Burdett*, *Palmerston*, and *Gladstone*. Traditionally the innkeeper was strongly inclined to this side until the bitter attacks of a section of the Liberal party on his business and very

existence forced him in self-protection into alliance with modern conservatism.

Little interesting fragments of local history are sometimes recorded on the signboards. For instance, in High Street, South Norwood, there are three public-houses in succession, the *Ship*, *Jolly Sailor*, and *Albion*. But for these we might forget that the Croydon Canal once ran through this district with a wharf for unloading barges. The *Sloop Inn*, at Blackhouse, in Sussex, dates from the time when the river Ouse was navigable as far as Lindfield. At the foot of Gipsy Hill is the *Gipsy Queen*, named after Margaret Finch, who ruled over the encampment of nomads in the forest and told fortunes to all comers. She died in 1760, at the age of 109, and was buried in Beckenham Churchyard. Owing to her constant habit of sitting with her chin resting on her knees, it was necessary to employ a deep square box in place of an ordinary coffin for her interment. Local worthies are not very frequent; but John Winchcombe, the famous clothier of Newbury, "the most considerable clothier that England ever had," is honoured at intervals along the Bath Road as *Jack of Newbury*. *General Wolfe*, unlike the prophets, finds special remembrance

in his own birthplace, Westerham; but Sir Walter Raleigh has been quite overlooked at Mitcham, in spite of the fact that he was the founder of its leading manufacture. The inhabitants of Islington are more grateful to *Sir Hugh Middleton* for providing them with the New River, and more than one house bearing this sign exists in the district.

Foreign princes have occasionally attained the distinction of tavern popularity, but none so frequently as *Frederick the Great*, whose portrait over the inspiring words "The Glorious Protestant Hero," was painted on many a signboard after the battle of Rosbach, and the *King of Prussia* is still a familiar name. *Garibaldi* is an instance of British sympathy with the political aspirations of a foreign people. Many English adventurers joined in the struggles of the young Italian nation, and its principal hero became for the time a popular idol of the very first order. The length to which a section of the community were led in their worship of the red-shirted revolutionist is satirised happily in Mortimer Collins' "Village Comedy," wherein the local publican constantly cites "Old Garry" as the proper person to appeal to in deciding delicate questions of etiquette and morality.

The *Anchor* at Liphook, on the old Portsmouth road, was a favourite resort of Edward II, when hunting in Woolmer Forest, and Queen Anne when visiting the Staghunt also put up here. To this inn came Samuel Pepys in 1668, "exceeding tremulous about highwaymen," having missed his way to Guildford while coming over Hindhead. Another inn which could many a tale unfold, if walls had tongues as well as ears, is the *Bull* at Coventry. Half a dozen conspiracies have been hatched under its spreading gables. Henry VII made it his headquarters before the Battle of Bosworth. Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned here for a short time; and it was the first meeting-place for the devisers of Gunpowder Plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament.

A handsomely-panelled and pilastered room in the *Crown and Treaty* at Uxbridge, is shown to visitors as part of the hall in which took place those six months of fruitless negotiations between King and Parliament in 1644, which ended in sealing the fate of the monarchy. We have not been able to trace the particular establishment, but it is said that an alehouse had its share in accomplishing the restoration of Charles II. It appears

that a messenger from the Parliament carrying letters to General Monk at Edinburgh travelled in company with one of the General's sergeants, and happened to mention that he also held despatches for the Governor of Edinburgh Castle. The circumstance aroused the suspicions of his companion. The messenger was induced to stop at a wayside inn and plied with brandy until he became so intoxicated that the papers could be taken from his person without detection. Then the sergeant posted by forced stages to his general with the packet, which was opened and perused. It turned out to contain an order for Monk's arrest. Policy and resentment combined to direct the eyes of Monk to Charles Stuart, and in due course the Restoration became an accomplished fact.

CHAPTER X

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

MANY of the inn signs to be met with in the old provincial trading centres recall the sports of our ancestors. Too often these were of a brutal and barbarous character, suited only to an age which took its pleasures strenuously and knew nothing of squeamishness and delicate nerves. Not that we of the twentieth century are at heart one whit more humane. The cockney who would faint at the bloodshed and slaughter in a bull-ring, devours greedily in his Sunday newspaper all the details of a horrible murder, or a railway accident.

Bull-running and bull-baiting was an attraction only rivalled by bear-baiting. The corporations of some towns had a by-law forbidding butchers to exhibit bull beef for sale, unless the animal had previously been baited by dogs for the amusement of the populace. Over the entrance of the ancient Butchers' Hall at Hereford, still hangs the bull-ring that was used on these occasions.

10—(2244)

It required the introduction of several fruitless bills into the House of Commons between 1802 and 1835, before an Act was finally passed to abolish the practice. *Dog and Bear* is a very common sign, usually Jacobean in

Horse and Groom, near Waltham St. Lawrence

its origin. *Bull and Ring*, *Dog and Bull*, *Bull and Butcher*, are all somewhat rare.

Cock-fighting was a very favourite spectacle from the earliest times, enjoyed heartily by gentle and serf, young and old, learned and simple. Nature intended the game-cock to strive for mastery with his rival, and with the weapons provided by nature the combat has a fearful interest for the modern British boy, as each spring new conflicts recur in the farmyard. But the art of the Elizabethan

sportsman supplemented nature with a sharp spur of steel. A graphic account of a cock-fight is given by Count Kilmansegge in his "Diary of a Journey to England, 1761-2." The scene is to be identified by the little passage from Queen Anne's Gate to Birdcage Walk, still known as Cock-Pit Alley.

"On the 1st February, we went to see a cock-fight, which lasted the whole of the week, where heavy bets, made by the Duke of Ancaster and others, for more than 100 guineas were at stake. The fight takes place at the Cock-Pit close to St. James's Park, in the vicinity of Westminster. In the middle of a circle and a gallery surrounded by benches, a slightly-raised theatre is erected upon which the cocks fight; they are a small kind of cock, to the legs of which a long spur, like a long needle is fixed, with which they know how to inflict damage on their adversaries very cleverly during the fight, but on which also they are frequently caught themselves, so breaking their legs. One bird of each of the couples which we saw fighting met with this misfortune, so that he was down in a moment, and unable to raise or to help himself, consequently his adversary at once had an enormous advantage. Notwithstanding this,

he fought with his beak for half an hour but the other bird had the best of it, and both were carried off with bleeding heads. No one who has not seen such a sight can conceive the uproar by which it is accompanied, as everybody at the same time offers and accepts bets . . . We were satisfied with seeing two fights, although we might have remained to see still more for the half-crown which we paid on entering."

The cock-pit was not infrequently to be found in the inn yards. At Lincoln the corporation pit was in the yard of the *Reindeer*, and here James I, a great patron of this sport, was entertained. Pope, whilst living with his father at Chiswick, took great delight in cock-fighting; all his pocket-money was laid out in buying birds from various choice strains. From this passion, we are told, his mother had the good sense and skill to wean him.

Country towns generally contain an inn called the *Cock-fighters*, sometimes with remains of the old pit *in situ ;* and the sign of the *Cock and Bell* is said to be derived from the shrove-tide cock-fights, when boys matched their birds against each other, and to the lucky owner was awarded a silver bell, which he

wore in his hat for three Sundays following. Originally, the Shrovetide cocks were mounted on stools and stones thrown at them. Out of this has grown the modern "Cocoanut Shy."

The sign of the *Bird in Hand*, often merely facetious, may when seen on old inns, as at Widmore, near Bromley, have reference to hawking; so with *Hawk and Buckle* and *Falcon* which, as a rule, we are content to treat as heraldic emblems.

The *Kentish Bowman* and the *Bow and Arrow* remain to tell us of archery, the favourite village pastime in rural England until quite recently. It is a disputed point whether the resilient virtues of the wood, or their use in Palm Sunday processions had most to answer for the hacked and mutilated condition of the branches of old churchyard yews. *Speed the Plough* recalls the rustic ploughing competitions.

Dog and Gun, *Dog and Duck*, *Dog and Badger*, *Fox and Hounds*, and *Huntsman*, all betray the characteristic trait of John Bull, who celebrates a fine frosty morning by "going out to kill something." The Hunt meet is usually in front of some leading inn; and hither when the run is over choice blades

repair to recount the doings of the day. These inns abound in trophies of the chase, mounted antlers, stuffed foxes, otters, or rare birds in glass cases ; though few can vie with the collection of specimens and prints at the *Swan*, Tarporley ; where even the plate and crockery bear witness to the pursuits of its patrons.

The *Blue Cap* at Sandiway, in Cheshire, built in 1715, was so re-named in 1762 in memory of a very remarkable hound. So fast was his pace that a weight had to be slung round his neck to prevent him outracing the rest of the pack. On one side of the signboard his portrait appears. On the reverse the following account of the race which first brought him into notice :

" On Saturday, September 28th, 1762, Blue Cap and Wanton, ye property of Mr. Smith-Barry, Master of ye Cheshire, in a match over ye Beacon course at Newmarket, beat a couple of Mr. Meynell's (ye Quorn), one of which was Richmond. Sixty horses started with ye hounds. Mr. Smith-Barry's huntsman, Cooper, was ye first up, but ye mare that carried him was quite blind at ye end. Only twelve got to ye end. Will Craine, who trained ye Cheshire hounds, came in

twelfth on Rib. Betting was 6 to 4 on Meynell's."

According to Daniel the race was run at fully thirty miles an hour.

From an inn named after an hound, we pass to another in the same county, much more curious and antique in its thatched roof gables and old furniture, which keeps green the memory of a splendid racehorse. The *Smoker* at Plumbley has nothing to do with tobacco. The portrait of the old horse, together with the arms of Sir George Leicester, father of the first Baron de Tabley, owner of the horse, have been painted on the signboard by the daughter of Lady Leighton Warren, a member of this family.

Inns are no longer betting centres, but their owners are keenly interested in sport, and many jovial souls still notch calendars by racing events, referring to some local episodes as having occurred "in the year when Stickphast won the Derby." Although the *Running Horse* was a Hanoverian emblem, most of the houses of this name within a few miles of Epsom must owe their origin to the racing fraternity. The old *Running Horse* at Sandling, near Maidstone, so students of Dickens declare, suggested Mr. Pickwick's adventure

with the eccentric steed, hired for the benefit of Mr. Winkle.

Bowls is still almost as favourite a pastime at the old inns as it was in the days of Sir Francis Drake. In East Anglia the greens are often of remarkable size and beautifully kept. The finest bowling green in the South of England is, we believe, that behind the *Queen's Head* at Hawkhurst, an old-fashioned house to be visited for its sweet situation and cosy arrangements—as well as for the almost unique collection of old furniture gathered together by the late Mr. Clements. On the lawn of the *Anchor* at Hartfield, a game is in vogue called "Clock Golf," which we have seen nowhere else, but which possesses its attractions.

It is a traditional habit among prize-fighters when they retire on their laurels to assume the management of a tavern, where their reputation makes them efficient in maintaining order; but the sedentary style of life usually produces too much adipose tissue for perfect health and happiness. Old cricketers also drift into the same haven. Indeed, the public-house has contributed many of the best exponents of the national game. William Clarke, the father of modern

cricket, and first secretary of the famous All England Eleven, kept the *Trent Bridge Inn* at Nottingham; Noah Mann, a famous Sussex player, and one of the heroes of the Hambleden Club, came from an inn at North Chapel, near the Surrey border of the county. He is said to have once made ten runs with one hit. At Mitcham, nursery alike of vegetation and of Surrey cricket, every publican is a cricketer of repute. *Bat and Ball*, *Cricketers*, and similar signs are, of course, to be met with everywhere.

At the *Swan*, Ash Vale, close to Basingstoke Canal, and at present kept by Mr. John Tupper, the well-known army trainer, there still remains one of the last rat-pits—of course, now not utilized for the sport. Ratting survived cock-fighting for a time, the usual method being to turn a dog in with a number of rats, which he was expected to kill within a given number of minutes. The pit was about six feet in diameter with a high unclimbable rim either of wood or polished cement.

A more humane, but very exciting rough-and-tumble competition may occasionally be witnessed in the public-houses of some east-end districts, and is entitled "Boot hunting."

Various individuals who pay an entrance fee of perhaps sixpence, group themselves on a platform at the end of the room, and remove their footgear which are put into a barrel, shaken up, and then deposited in a heap. The signal is given, each man scrambles for his own property, and to the first who succeeds in getting his boots on the prize is awarded. Sometimes the competitors are chosen by the audience whose "gate-money" provides the trophy.

We can hardly trace the sites even of the inns and alehouses between Ware and Tottenham mentioned in the "Compleat Angler." But, like old Isaac Walton, the modern piscator loves to sample "the good liquor that our honest forefathers did use to drink of, which preserved their health, and made them to live so long and to do so many good deeds!" The *Talbot* has disappeared from Ashbourne on the Dove, but there are "other inns as good." The *Isaac Walton Inn*, on the Dove, has been for many years a favourite resort of anglers. On the banks of the Thames, Kennet, Arun, or Great Ouse, there are hostelries in which anglers much do congregate at eventide during the season; on their walls gigantic trout (suspected by the

stranger to be modelled in plaster), float in most lifelike attitude within a sea of painted glass. And we know of snug bar parlours in the backwoods of Bermondsey, Finsbury, and Bethnal Green, whither about nine o'clock men laden with rods and heavy baskets or sacks may be observed hurrying along to be in time for the "weighing in."

The inn yards of Bishopsgate and Southwark witnessed the early performances of the English drama; and the auditorium of the theatre takes its form from the tiers of galleries surrounding the "pit" which the players found there. Music halls have also grown up from the impromptu concerts in the taverns. The older music halls, like the *Oxford*, *Middlesex*, or *Deacon's*, were twenty years ago simply public-houses with a hall behind them, where a chairman, armed with a hammer to maintain silence, announced each performer by name and arranged the order of the programme.

Many inns contain museums. At the *Marquis of Granby*, near New Cross Station, there is a magnificent collection of hunting-knives, rifles, etc. The late Mr. Frank Churchill, of the *White Lion*, Warlingham, displayed in the ancient chimney-corner of that house

gridirons, spits, and domestic utensils of ancient pattern, and Mr. Alfred Churchill had a similar museum at the *White Hart*, at Bletchingley.

For some unknown reason the police are discouraging these museums, and in some districts publicans are warned against harbouring games of any kinds. Even good old English manly pastimes like bowls and skittles are under the ban of the licensing magistrates.

The other day we discussed the matter with an old yeoman farmer, while we watched a quartette of young fellows playing a kind of bagatelle. He declared that the effect of this policy, now so sedulously pursued by the police, of depriving public-house frequenters of any species of recreation whatever, was fast driving young men into the political clubs where extravagant gambling and hard drinking, especially of spirits, was the fashion. Many promising careers had been ruined in this way—and this we may corroborate from our own experience in various towns. With tears in his eyes the old man confessed to us that his vote had blackballed his own boy from admission into the local club. The total expenditure of the group during a whole

evening's amusement at the public-house amounted to a sum not exceeding a shilling; perchance at the club they might have been tempted to squander away at least half their week's earnings.

CHAPTER XI

THE INNS OF LITERATURE AND ART

JOHN BALL, shut up in the Archbishop's prison at Canterbury, fell a'longing for "the green fields and the whitethorn bushes, and the lark singing over the corn, and the talk of good fellows round the alehouse bench." The same craving for the real things of life comes to every creative genius fretting against class restrictions. Sir Walter Scott, when staying with Wordsworth at Grassmere, usually managed to give his host the slip in order to spend an hour or two in the *Swan* beyond the village; just as Addison had fled the splendid state of Holland House for the *Old White Horse* in Kensington Road. Either this wayside inn or the *Red Lion* at Hampton, was the scene of the historic drinking bout between Addison and Pope, which so upset the latter's digestion and sense of dignity that he ever afterwards described the great essayist as a terrible drunkard. The *Bull and Bush*, in North End Hampstead, now chiefly patronised by holiday makers on account of its attractive tea-gardens,

The Falstaff, Canterbury

was another resort where Addison, Dryden, Steele, and the rest of the famous galaxy of wits loved to gather. It is said also to have once been the country seat of Hogarth.

More temperate in their devotion to the flowing bowl, but scarcely less brilliant in their abilities, were the company who fifty years ago used to visit the *Bull* at Woodbridge. George Borrow, the gipsy wanderer; Edward Fitzgerald, the translator of "Omar Khayyam," and Charles Keene, the *Punch* Artist, were among the number. Old John Grout, who kept the house, was himself an odd character. When Lord Tennyson came to stay with Fitzgerald, at Woodbridge, the latter remarked to Grout that the town ought to feel itself honoured. John was not a student of poetry, and inquired of Mr. Groome (whose son tells the story in "Two Suffolk Friends") who was the gentleman that Mr. Fitzgerald had been talking of. "Mr. Tennyson, the poet-laureate," was the reply. "Dissay," said John, hazily; "anyhow, he didn't fare to know much about hosses when I showed him over my stables!" In these stables there is a tomb to the memory of George Carlow, who was buried there in 1738, at his own special desire.

Many, who afterwards rose to eminence in

the world of art and letters were born at inns. David Garrick's birthplace was at the *Raven* at Hereford; at the Garrick Theatre, hard by, Kitty Clive, Mrs. Siddons and Kemble made some of their early successes. William Cobbett was born at the *Jolly Farmer* at Farnham; while at the little *Wheatsheaf* in Kelvedon, now disused, but still retaining the wrought-iron bracket from which the sign used to swing, Charles Spurgeon, the famous preacher, first saw the light. Cardinal Wolsey's father is generally described as a butcher, but he was also a tavern-keeper at Ipswich. Like dear old Tom Hughes, who kept the *Black Lion* at Walsingham, a few years ago, he combined with his inn, branch shops for the sale of bread and meat. It was at the *Black Bear* at Devizes, then kept by his father, that Sir Thomas Lawrence first discovered his talent as a painter. We may add that a personage with an entirely different kind of reputation —Dick Turpin—was born at the *Crown*, Hempstead, Essex.

A very large number of inns all over England are dedicated to the memory of Shakespeare; in fact, a print dated 1823 shows the chief portion of the house where the Bard was born at Stratford-on-Avon, as a very

picturesque inn—the *Swan and Maiden Head* —with a portly, good-humoured landlord standing in the doorway and inviting visitors to enter and drink a bumper. Of Shakespeare's

Sir John Falstaff, Newington

characters, the one best known on the sign-boards is Sir John Falstaff. There are three *Falstaff* inns on the Dover road. The first is that on Gad's Hill, the scene of the hero's most glorious exploit, and incidentally connecting him with his prototype, Sir John Oldcastle. At Canterbury, just outside the West Gate, the *Falstaff* is a fine old-fashioned comfortable house with some very good linen-fold panelling.

But we love best to linger over the *Sir John Falstaff* at Newington, near Sittingbourne. The projecting upper storey, bracketed out on grinning satyrs, the excellent portrait of the fat knight on the signboard, the noble cornice, and the rakish lines of the great red-tiled roof all give the distinctive character of the best Jacobean work. Standing amid its homelier neighbours in the village street, it looks like a rollicking cavalier who has come down in the world and is just a little bit ashamed of being seen in such company. His finery is sadly faded; he is obliged now to shift for himself and pick up what he can among these common people. If we wait awhile, he will take us aside, and confide in us about his doings, when he could share in the gay monarch's revels with the best of them. *Ben Jonson*, *Garrick*, and *Dr. Syntax*, are almost the only other literary or dramatic signs that are at all common.

The *Three Pigeons* at Brentford was, in all likelihood, one of the haunts of Shakespeare, and was certainly frequented by Ben Jonson, who mentions it in the "Alchymist," as also does Thomas Middleton in "The Roaring Girl." At this time the landlord was John Lowin, of the Globe Theatre, said to have been

the original creator of Falstaff in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," and of the part of Henry VIII. He died in great poverty during the Commonwealth and the inn has lately been rebuilt.

Whether the *Bell* at Edmonton is really the house at which John Gilpin ought to have dined is a controversial point, in spite of the graphic portrait of the hero on his mettlesome steed. More authentic is the fact that, at the *Bell*, Charles Lamb was in the habit of taking a parting glass with his friends before seeing them off by the London coach.

The *White Swan* at Henley-in-Arden, and the *Red Lion* at Henley, dispute the claim to having inspired William Shenstone's poem "Written at an Inn." Dr. Johnson decided in favour of the latter, and would repeat with emotion the concluding verse which was scratched in the inn window:

> "Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round
> Where'er his stages may have been,
> May sigh to think he still has found
> The warmest welcome at an inn."

By way of antithesis we subjoin the following poem on a window in the *Star and Garter* at Brighton:

"Wm. Vear
Slept Here
October the 1st
Last Year."

In the earlier chapters of "The Cloister and the Hearth," a variety of characteristic mediæval inns are described, with much archæological accuracy and also with a sly satirical humour. "Like Father, like Son," is a proverb very true in the unchanging byways of Central Europe. Charles Reade is for ever giving us graphic touches regarding the eccentricities and shortcomings of Black Forest and Burgundian inns of our own time. Delightful, too, is the scene at the *Pied Merlin* in Conan Doyle's "White Company," and we appreciate it none the less that some of the appointments at Dame Eliza's hostelry were scarcely likely to be found in a New Forest inn so early as the reign of Edward III.

For the coaching inns recourse must be had to the pages of "Joseph Andrews," "Tom Jones," and "Pickwick," and for the smaller class of inns, "The Old Curiosity Shop." Fielding and Dickens are each inimitable in their way; the earlier novelist concentrates on humanity in its many sorts and conditions; Dickens, on the contrary, revels in surrounding

details. He loves to dally with every smoke-stained beam, lattice-window, or row of battered pewter pots and blue mugs, before ushering in the motley throng who gather round the tap-room fire, or the fine lady and gentleman in the smartly-appointed chaise whom the landlord receives so obsequiously.

Many of the best scenes in old comedies are laid in the inns. When they were a general place of resort for all classes, including men of rank and fortune, they naturally lent themselves to the unexpected meetings and odd blunders which serve to make up a farcical plot. County, racing and hunting balls were all held in the principal inn of a town; just the opportunity for a needy adventurer to introduce himself by impersonation or otherwise. The details of the scheme are arranged in the Coffee Room; and landlord or waiter supply the necessary information enabling the lover to pose successfully as Simon Pure. Then, again, the audience were familiar with the surroundings and were easily drawn into sympathetic interest. Waiter, boots, and ostler were all valuable properties to be utilized in supplying the humorous element as occasion served.

George Colman, the younger, chose for much

of the action of his play, "John Bull, or the Englishman's Fireside," a little wayside inn on the Cornish border. Sir Walter Scott praised this comedy as "by far the best example of our later comic drama. The scenes of broad humour are executed in the best possible taste; and the whimsical, yet native characters, reflect the manners of real life." Not the least pleasing of these is Denis Brulgruddery, the warm-hearted impulsive landlord of the *Red Cow*. And so it ever is. We associate the inn with genial comfort and old English hospitality; the sight of it kindles every good sentiment of human kindness within us, and we hail with enthusiasm the reconciliation of father and child, the union of two constant lovers, and happiness restored all round. There is nothing so successful on the stage as an inn scene.

Artists have also shared in the making of the inns. A host of signboards are attributed to Hogarth or that eccentric and profligate genius, George Morland. Isaac Fuller was another eminent painter who turned his talents in this direction. The *Royal Oak* sign at Bettws-y-Coed, now in the possession of the Willoughby d'Eresby family, was painted by David Cox, the *George and Dragon* at

Hayes, in Kent, by Millais. Outside the *King's Head* at Chigwell—the Maypole of "Barnaby Rudge"—hangs a portrait of Charles I, by Miss Herring, while the sign of the *George and Dragon* at Wargrave is the work of Mr. George Leslie, R.A. St. George is depicted as taking refreshment after the battle out of a tankard of respectable size. The old inn by the bridge at Brandon on the Little Ouse, and the *Old Swan* at Fittleworth on the Arun, are full of paintings by modern artists; the latter has one room ornamented with panel pictures by various hands, and the sign (too delicate to hang outside) was painted by Caton Woodville. There was at Horncastle, in Lincolnshire, a signboard painted by Hilton, the Royal Academician, which hung over the inn door for over forty years, finally being taken down and sold, on a change of tenancy.

Mr. J. F. Herring, the animal painter, used to relate how he once painted a signboard for a carpenter employed by him. The carpenter afterwards took a beer shop and put the sign, which represented the "Flying Dutchman," over the door. Eventually he sold it for £50, and with the money emigrated to Australia.

Most old inns contain pictures more or less valuable, or at least old sporting prints. Few can compare in this respect with the *George* at Aylesbury, rebuilt about 1810, which from time immemorial has possessed a remarkable collection of good pictures; portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mytens, besides some well executed copies of Rubens, Raphael and others. It is supposed to have been brought from Eythorpe House, demolished in the early years of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XII

FANCIFUL SIGNS AND CURIOUS SIGNBOARDS

THE antiquarian magazines of the last century are full of correspondence and ingenious explanations of such signs as the *Pig and Whistle*, *Cat and Fiddle*, or *Goat in Boots*. Many of the suggestions offered are far more whimsical in character than the devices they profess to explain. "Cat and Fiddle" is supposed to be a corruption of *Caton Fidèle*, a certain incorruptible Governor of Calais. *Pig and Whistle* has been traced to "Peg and Wassail," with reference to the pegged tankards formerly passed round for the loving cup, each guest being expected to drink down to the next peg. "Pix and Housel," in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, or the Danish *Ave Maria*, and "Pige Washail" have also been suggested by the learned. Mr. T. C. Croker, in his "Walk to Fulham," attempted to derive the *Goat in Boots* at Fulham from *der Goden Boode*, the "Messenger of the Gods," or Mercury; the idea being that the house was originally a posting inn. The *Pig and*

Whistle may possibly be a rustic corruption of the *Bear and Ragged Staff* on a somewhat faded signboard.

Animals masquerading in human attire or performing human actions were a favourite conceit of the mediæval craftsman, as may be seen by the carvings on the stalls of our old cathedrals. Most likely we owe these humorous signs to the sign-painter himself. He was commissioned to design an advertisement that would puzzle inquisitive people and so attract customers.

The *Goat and Compasses* is supposed to be a corruption of a motto set up over inns during the period of puritan tyranny, "God encompasses us"; *Bag of Nails* of "Bacchanals." In default of better explanations we must accept these. Until recently a public house existed in St. James' Street, called the *Savoy Weepers*—a name which might open up an endless mystification if we did not know that the house was previously occupied by the *Savoir Vivre* Club. The *Goose and Gridiron* is, according to the *Tatler*, a parody of the favourite trade-mark of early music houses, the *Swan and Harp;* while the *Monster* in Pimlico may have been the monastery inn, built during the time that the

monks of Westminster Abbey farmed this estate.

Why Not, and *Dew Drop Inn* are, of course, invitations to the wayfarer; *Bird in Hand* and *Last House*, or *Final*, suggestion that he should not waste his opportunities to imbibe.

In the village of Sennen, Cornwall, is one of the best known inns, having for its sign the *First and Last*, which is quite obviously not intended as a limit to the drinker. It has reference, of course, to the fact that if you should be journeying to the south-west the inn will be the *last* one you will meet with before reaching the sea, whereas it will be the *first* should your journey be by ship coming eastward. As a matter of actual experience, hundreds of ships which in the course of a year "pick up" the light at Land's End have not been in sight of a public-house for months, during which they have been crossing thousands of miles of ocean. So that in the case of sailors working these particular vessels the name of the inn has a very appealing significance.

He would be a bold man who would venture to assert positively which is the best-known inn in London; but if the map be consulted, the *Elephant and Castle* will be seen to occupy a

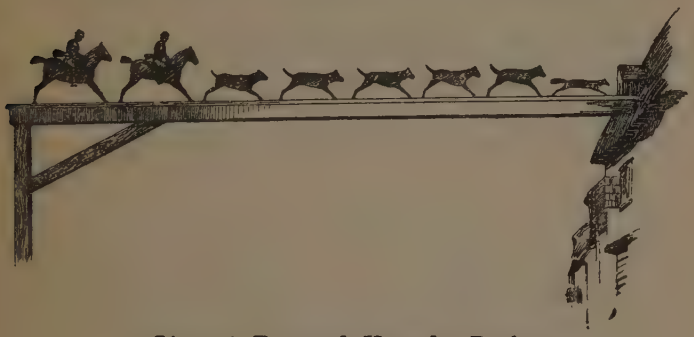
position at the junction of several great roads to the south, and if the volume of traffic which must daily go past the doors is considered, it needs very little more to convince most people that the *Elephant* is probably better known by name at all events, than any other public-house within the four-mile radius of Charing Cross. In coaching times the inn was passed by every traveller bound for the south-east, and some authorities have contended that when Shakespeare recommended that "In the south suburbs at the *Elephant* is best to lodge," [1] he had in his mind the celebrated hostelry of Newington Butts. But this is probably a mistake, for the *Elephant and Castle* did not come into existence until long after Shakespeare's time. In 1658, the ground upon which it now stands was not built upon, but probably the first inn on the site came into existence about twenty years later. In 1824, the inn was rebuilt, and since then there have been many additions and alterations which have got farther and farther away from the original building as it was in the seventeenth century. The *Elephant and Castle*, as far as the antiquarian is concerned, is now merely a curious

[1] "Twelfth Night"; Act III, Sc. 3.

name. Another extremely rare sign in London is the *Sieve*, which as late as 1890 stood in the Minories. In 1669 there was a *Sieve* in Aldermanbury, but more is known of the one in the Minories. It was referred to in the "Vade Mecum for Malt Worms," 1715, and was then considered one of the oldest and most noted public-houses of London. It adjoined Holy Trinity Church. Underneath were crypt-like cellars which may originally have had connection with the adjoining convent of the nuns of St. Clare. In the records of the Parish of Holy Trinity, which was all included within the ancient precincts of the convent, there is mention of the appointment of a "vitler to the parish." On February 13th, 1705, is a record of a vestry meeting at the *Sieve* "about agreeing to pull down the churchyard wall." On this occasion so serious was the discussion that as much as six shillings was spent in refreshments before the matter was settled. A good deal of speculation on the origin of the name of this old inn has been indulged in, one solution being that the chalk foundations in the crypt may have suggested the sign. The Metropolitan Railway Company acquired the property, and closed the house in 1886,

before its final disappearance four years later.

The *Adam and Eve*, another common London sign; is, we have reason to believe, frequently a repainting of the Zodiacal sign of the *Twins*, the city having according to astrologers, its ascendant in Gemini, the



Sign of Fox and Hounds, Barley

House of Mercury, who rules merchandise and all ingenious arts.

An odd sign to find in the heart of Essex is the *Whalebone*, and in the same county at Great Leighs, there is a *Saint Anna's Castle*, which is supposed to stand on the site of a hermitage made sacred by the presence of some local saint.

Dean Swift was once asked by the village barber of Co. Meath, by whom he was regularly shaved, to assist him in the invention of an

inscription for the sign of the *Jolly Barber*, a house which it was intended to conduct as an inn and a barber's shop combined. Swift at once composed the following couplet, which remained under the painted sign depicting a barber with a razor in one hand and a full pot in the other, for many years:

"Rove not from pole to pole, but step in here
Where nought excels the shaving but—the beer."

The Three Loggerheads, generally in the form of two silly looking faces and the motto:

"We three
Loggerheads be,"

is an attempt to take a mean advantage of the unwary spectator. Sometimes two asses appear on the signboard with the inscription "When shall we three meet again?" and this sign is alluded to by Shakespeare in "Twelfth Night." At Mabelthorpe is a unique sign called the *Book in Hand*. It is not so much on account of its name that it is curious, for this might have occurred to anyone, particularly in days when the ability to read was not so conspicuously common as it is to-day. But the sign itself is so odd. A rudely shaped hand and forearm sticks out straight from the brick wall and in the hand is an open book with three Latin crosses on the right page

and one on the left. The origin of the sign is lost, but it seems obviously to have had at one time some ecclesiastical connection.

Many names of inns have arisen from the puns on the landlord or locality. The *Black Swan* in Bartholomew Lane, once a resort for musical celebrities was kept by Owen Swan, parish clerk of St. Michael's Cornhill. The *Brace* Tavern, in Queen's Bench Prison, was opened by two brothers of the name of Partridge. *Hat and Tun* was the sign of a public-house in Hatton Garden, and the *Warbolt in Tun* of the little inn at Warbleton, in Sussex. At least one *Three Pigeons* began business with a worthy surnamed Pigeon for landlord, although this sign is usually derived from a coat of arms charged with three martlets. According to a correspondent, the *Bell Inn* of a village not far from Oxford was formerly kept by John Good, who set up this inscription under a gigantic representation of a bell :

> " My name, likewise my ale, is good,
> Walk in, and taste my own home-brewed,
> For all that know John Good can tell
> That, like my sign, it bears the Bell."

Ben Jonson in the " Alchymist " satirised this kind of wit :

> " He shall have *a bell* that's Abel,
> And by it standing one whose name is *Dee*

In a rug gown, there's *D* and *Rug*, that's Drug ;
And right anenst him a dog snarling *err*,
There's *Drugger*, Abel Drugger. That's his sign."

The last *Honest Lawyer* in London has just ceased to exist, but there is still an *Honest Miller* at Withersden, near Wye, in Kent. It is approached by devious ways and difficult to find. Hence perhaps the name. Like the *Silent Woman*, the honest lawyer was represented with his head cut off. A very famous signboard, said to have been painted by Hogarth, was *The Man loaded with Mischief*, in Oxford Street. The man was carrying a woman, glass in hand, a magpie, and a monkey. Underneath was the rhyme :

" A monkey, a magpie, and a wife
Is the true emblem of strife."

At Grantham, an eccentric lord of the manor about a century ago insisted on having all the signs of public-houses on his estate painted with the political colour which he favoured. Thus the town possessed, in 1830, the following : *Blue Boat*, *Blue Sheep*, *Blue Bull*, *Blue Ram*, *Blue Lion*, *Blue Bell*, *Blue Cow*, *Blue Boar*, *Blue Horse*, and *Blue Inn*. By way of retaliation, a neighbouring landowner and political opponent actually named one of his houses the *Blue Ass*. Grantham also can boast of the original *Beehive Inn* with the motto :

"Stop! Traveller, this wondrous sign explore,
And say when thou hast viewed it o'er,
Grantham, now, two rarities are thine,
A lofty steeple, and a living sign."

On Gallows Tree Heath, near Reading, there stands a *Reformation Inn*, somewhat grim and tantalizing in its greeting to the unfortunate wretches who were led past it to execution, and had lost the opportunity to profit by the advice. A cynical humour of the same description must have suggested the *Half Brick* for the sign of an inn at Worthing. It is said that the aborigines of some towns in England invariably welcome a stranger by "heaving half a brick at him."

The original *Hole in the Wall* is believed to have been either (1) a highwayman's retreat, such as the *Hole in the Wall* in Chandos Street, where Claude Duval was captured, or (2) an aperture made in the wall of a debtor's prison through which charitable people might offer gifts of money or victuals to the unfortunate inmates. At the *Hole in the Wall* in the Borough there is a museum of curiosities worth a visit, and another under the railway arches of Waterloo Station is a noted depot for Petersfield ales, much frequented by railway men and various odd characters. There is to this day a very suggestive hole in the wall

at *Turpin's Cave*, a small inn near High Beech, Epping Forest. In this hole it is commonly believed that the celebrated highwayman hid himself on many occasions when hard pressed by the police. The story can

Sign of Black's Head, Ashbourne

very easily be believed by anyone with a spark of imagination, for the inn lies in a secluded nook which even to-day is not at all easy to find, in spite of a signboard stuck up in the gorse bushes some little distance from the road. The hole itself is a kind of arched ruin, bricked over, and might at a pinch have held Black Bess and her famous rider.

Almost gone are the heavy frames and beams which once stretched across the highways and effectually proclaimed the name and style under which the innkeeper carried on his business. On these beams a group of

swans disported in effigy before the *Four Swans* at Waltham Cross. A fine magpie dangled from the centre at Stonham, Suffolk, while elsewhere a fox was represented crossing the beam and followed by a bevy of hounds. There is still remaining such a beam, from the centre of which a bell is suspended outside the *Bell* at Edenbridge. Another is still in use at Ashbourne, Derbyshire, where the *Green Man and Black's Head*, an old Georgian posting house, announces its existence by a long beam stretched across the street, supported at one end by a pole, the other end running into the red brick wall of the building, immediately over the typical archway leading to the inn yard. The black's head is an effigy in carved and painted wood, planted firmly in the centre of the beam and looking for all the world as if it had only lately been cut off and put there to warn other blacks of a similar awful fate, if ever they should chance to come to Ashbourne. Under the head, suspended from the beam is a big framed picture, and a small secondary beam on each side has recently been placed to carry those two terribly modern words, "garage" and "petrol." One can fancy the old driver of the four-in-hand, could he come to life again, scratching

his head in perplexity over the hidden mysteries of these literary innovations to the familiar sign. Ashbourne, it may be remarked in passing, whilst perhaps not glorying in "one man one public-house," is certainly as close to that condition of things as any town in England. To a stranger visiting Ashbourne in the middle of the week and feeling the charm of its quiet old-world streets with but few people walking about, it is a matter for wonder as to how all the licensed houses keep going. But go there on market days and note the waggons and farmers' carts standing in rows outside every hostelry and the matter becomes much more easily understood. Ashbourne, like one or two other towns of the North Derbyshire and Staffordshire moors, has until quite recently been cut off from the run of the country's traffic, and is still a market centre for a very extensive agricultural district. Within the last year or two a road motor service has placed it in rapid and frequent communication with the county town, so that this comparative isolation is likely to last very little longer.

The *White Hart* at Scole, in Norfolk, once had the most expensive and elaborate sign of this character ever produced. High above

the road it stretched, on one side attached to the house, and resting on a brick pier at the opposite end across the way. In the centre was a noble White Hart, carved in a stately wreath, while on each side were no less than

Sign of White Hart, Witham

twenty-four allegorical figures in compartments. The whole was designed by John Fairchild, in 1655, and cost £1,057. An engraving was published by Martin in 1740. By the way, this inn also possessed "a very large round bed big enough to hold

fifteen or twenty couples in imitation of the great bed at Ware."

Of existing signs, the most remarkable is the *Red Lion* of Martlesham outside an inn which is itself both old and curious. This monster, a byword all over Suffolk, was probably at one time the figure-head of a ship, and local tradition ascribes it to one of the Dutch warships destroyed in the battle of Sole Bay, fought off Southwold in 1672. Outside the *Bear* at Wantage stands a life-like carved bear on a high pedestal; at the *Bear* at Chelsham, in Surrey, a large white bear lurks amongst the shrubs of the front garden in a way very startling to timid passers-by, especially at dusk. The *Swan* at Great Shefford, in Bucks, has a most effective sign, in the form of a large vane representing a swan; while the *White Horse* at Ipswich, as in Mr. Pickwick's time, "is rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rapacious animal with flowing mane and tail distantly resembling an insane cart-horse, which is elevated above the principal door."

The disused *Sun Inn* at Saffron Walden, built about 1625, has for its sign a noble piece of plaster work in the tympanum representing the Sun supported by two giants. A curious

old piece of carving which displays a white swan chained to a tree flanked by the arms of England and France forms the sign of the

Angel Inn, Theale

Swan Inn at Clare, and probably is intended to commemorate some triumph of the House of Clarence over the Lancastrians. Another beautiful little inn, now disused and sadly neglected, the *Angel* at Theale, has angel heads introduced over each of its dainty oriels.

Many of the *White Hart* inns retain painted signboards of quite passable quality. At Chelmsford, the animal is carved and rests on a projecting bracket. More prominent, though not conceived in a very artistic spirit, is the *White Hart* at Witham, cut out and painted on a huge piece of sheet copper. This is widely known as the most conspicuous and telling sign on the road from London to Ipswich.

The *White Hart* in the Borough, now converted into a club in honour of Sam Weller, possessed anciently the largest signboard in London. Perhaps this is why Jack Cade selected it in 1450 for his headquarters. Of existing signboards the most elaborate is the *Five Alls* at Marlborough, once a very common subject for the tavern picture. The first compartment portrays the Queen with the label, "I rule all." In the second is a Bishop, "I pray for all," Next comes a lawyer, "I plead for all," followed by a truculent soldier, "I fight for all." The last figure is the taxpayer, "I pay for all." Some facetious innkeepers added a sixth, the Devil with the motto, "I take all!" This sign with local modifications is not unknown outside the drinking shops in Holland, and, according

to Larbert, a characteristic example may be seen swinging under the blue sky in the sunny street of Valetta in Malta. The largest sign we have ever come across is the tile painting on the front of the *Kentish Drovers* in the old Kent Road.

But the number of these quaint and comical signs is diminishing every year. The innkeeper plies his trade under more difficult conditions and is glad to accept the tempting cash offers made to him by collectors. In place of the old carved figures or painting, last survival of the days when every building in a town was distinguished by some badge or device, the name of a public-house now generally appears written in gilt letters on the signboard. Even this is frequently lost amid the flaring advertisements of the brewer, and of the various brands of whiskey retailed in the establishment. In fact, the frequenters of such a house of entertainment, especially in the London district, are sometimes ignorant of its ancient designation, and refer to it either by the name of the landlord, or of the wholesale dealer, "Mooney's" or "Guests," for whose business it serves as a local branch.

Landlords of inns near London are not usually very original in their views of life,

and rarely advertise any spark of humour. Perhaps they take their duties to the public too seriously. Occasionally, however, one comes across evidence that the keeper of an inn is sufficiently detached in mind as to admit within the walls of his house of business a jest or two in print. These are usually framed and hung up in the bar, and as they have never been seen quite new, but are frequently fly-blown and yellow with age, it would seem to follow that the race of facetious landlords has come to an end. In the *Duke of Wellington Inn*, near High Beech, Epping Forest, the following rules hang in the bar. They are probably from their phraseology American in origin, and the second was evidently designed as a sarcastic if not effectual check upon manners and customs in business houses of the States.

NOTICE

1. A man is kept engaged in the yard to do all the CURSING and SWEARING at this establishment.
2. A Dog is kept to do all the BARKING.
3. Our Potman or " Chucker Out " has won seventy-five prizes, and is an excellent shot with a Revolver.
4. The UNDERTAKER calls every morning FOR ORDERS.
5. The Lord helps those who help themselves ; but the Lord help those that are caught helping themselves here.

This notice hangs in an old frame over the door. On an adjoining wall is the following :

OFFICE RULES

1. Gentlemen upon entering will leave the door open or apologise.
2. Those having no business should remain as long as possible, take a chair and lean against the wall ; it will preserve the wall and prevent it falling upon us.
3. Gentlemen are requested to smoke, especially during office hours ; tobacco and segars of the finest brands will be supplied gratis.
4. Spit on the floor, as the spittoons are only for ornaments.
5. TALK LOUD or WHISTLE, especially when we are engaged. If this has not the desired effect, SING.
6. If we are in business conversation with anyone, gentlemen are requested not to wait until we are disengaged, but join us, as we are particularly fond of speaking to half a dozen or more at one time.
7. Profane language is expected at all times, especially if ladies are present.
8. Put your feet on the table, or lean against the desk. It will be of great assistance to those who are writing.
9. Persons having no business to transact will call often or excuse themselves.
10. Should anyone desire to borrow money do not fail to ask for it, as we do not require it for business purposes, but merely for the sake of lending.

We copied the following from a placard either in the *Windmill* at Hollingbourne, or the *Ten Bells* at Leeds, in Kent :

GOOD ADVICE

Call Frequently,	Be Good Company,
Drink Moderately,	Part Friendly,
Pay Honourably,	Go Home Quietly.

Let these lines be no man's sorrow, pay to-day and trust to-morrow.

In the *General Wolfe* at Westerham :

THE LANDLORD'S PUZZLE.

More	Shall	Trust
Score	I	Sent
for	what	I
my	And	Have
Do	Beer	If
Pay	Clerk	Brewers
I	May	So
Must	Their	My

And at Groombridge :

My ale is good, my measure just,
And yet—my friends, I cannot trust.

CHAPTER XIII

HAUNTED INNS

WHY is it that haunted inns are so scarce and difficult to find? We have sought for them far and wide. During thirty years of wanderings among the old inns,we have retired for the night full oft into blackened oak-lined chambers with secret sliding panels in the walls, or traps in the ceiling, that offered golden opportunities for any ghost of enterprise; rooms where heavy tie-beams and dark recesses cast eerie shadows in the moonlight; vast churchlike dormitories with springy floors which if one jumped out of bed caused the door incontinently to unlatch and open in a distinctly ghostlike manner. But no supernatural visitor has ever favoured us. In vain we have tried the experiment of sleeping in bedchambers which the great ones of the earth have made memorable, from Queen Elizabeth to Dick Turpin. No cavalier knight has ever tried to unburden his conscience to us, no spectral dame has come to moan and wring her hands with grief, no

clanking chains on the stairs, merely the peaceful dreamless sleep of the proverbial top.

The learned in occult lore tell us that the astral body must follow the habits of the departed to whom it once belonged. It would therefore prefer private dwellings to the inns which it merely occupied for a night or two. Ghosts with a grievance would find more congenial occupation in annoying surviving relatives rather than the passing traveller who is not interested in their concerns. Well-informed and intelligent spectres, of course (unless they had some private end in view), steer clear of inns altogether. At the baronial hall, the ghost is a cherished petted heirloom; the innkeeper regards him as a nuisance, driving away the more timid class of customers, and in case of trouble might call in the parson to exorcise him with bell, book and candle. Then, again, in the halcyon days for the spooks, say a hundred years ago, the traveller generally drank deeply to the good of the house. The spectral vision fell flat when tested on an individual well inoculated with spirit of a more material nature. In face of all these discouragements, the ghosts, as a rule, left hotels and taverns unmolested.

One exception is to be found at the *Ostrich* at Colnbrook, a beautiful old Elizabethan coaching inn, retaining near the middle of its long half-timbered and gabled front, above the yard gate, the platform by which "the quality" embarked on the coach. It is an ideal place for a ghost to take sanctuary, with many corridors and low-ceilinged chambers, all lined through with carved chestnut panelling and twisted pilasters. There is a Queen's room, said to have been used by Queen Elizabeth while awaiting the repair of her coach which had lost a wheel crossing the ford. Over the mantelpiece is her coat of arms. But chiefest of all is the Blue Chamber, sacred to the memory of Dick Turpin. This ubiquitous villain, so tradition states, once leaped from the first floor window and escaped into the street when pressed by the authorities.[1]

The ghost is also associated with the Blue Chamber. His name in the flesh was Thomas Cole, and his story is told in a very rare work of Jacobean date, published by Thowe, of Reading.

[1] Some of the rival establishments at Colnbrook contend that the above honours belong to them, and not to the *Ostrich*.

Once upon a time in the reign of Henry I, the *Ostrich* was already a flourishing inn kept by a man and his wife who were secretly robbers and murderers. When a guest of substance came along and was considered a suitable victim, the husband would remark aloud: Wife, I know of a fat pig if you want one!" and she would answer, "Well, put him into the pigsty till to-morrow." Then the visitor was put into the Blue Chamber above the kitchen. Underneath the bed there was a trap-door, so arranged that by pulling out two iron pins in the kitchen below the whole fell down, and plunged the unfortunate man into an immense iron brewing-vat filled with boiling water. The dead body was then thrown into the Colne which flows just behind the house. If other travellers asked for the murdered man in the morning, they were told that he had saddled his horse and ridden away before dawn. As a matter of fact, the horse had been saddled and taken away to a barn, some distance off, where the innkeeper cropped and branded it in such a manner that recognition was impossible.

Thomas Cole was a Reading clothier, rich and thrifty. He was in the habit of riding to London, and sleeping at the *Ostrich* on his

The "Clothiers' Arms," Stroud

return journey, when he usually carried a considerable sum of money, the proceeds of his sales. For a long time Cole had been marked out for the cauldron as he usually travelled alone. After the manner of most sixteenth-century legends—Arden of Faversham, for example—the murderers were on several occasions balked of their prey at the last moment when the guest had been shown into the Blue Chamber. Once it was his friends, Gray of Gloucester and William of Worcester, who also traded with cloth in London, and arrived unexpectedly late at night. Another time a tavern dispute kept the house in commotion; a third time a rumour came that his friend Thomas à Beckett's house in Chepe was on fire, and he returned to town. On another visit he was so ill that a nurse must needs watch by his bedside.

But at last the opportunity came. Poor Thomas was full of forebodings of some impending calamity all the evening. He dictated his will to the landlord, disposing of his wealth, half to his only daughter, half to his wife. His goodness failed to move the hearts of the greedy couple, and that night the bolts were withdrawn and he was scalded to death.

When the innkeeper had disposed of the body in the river, he found that the merchant's horse had broken loose and wandered out into the street, where he was lost for the time being.

Next day, Cole's family, who were expecting his return, were alarmed at his non-appearance. They sent his servants to make inquiries at the inn. The horse was found on the road. The servants were not satisfied with the explanations given them, and appealed to the authorities. On hearing this, the innkeeper lost courage and fled secretly away ; but his wife was apprehended and confessed the truth. It appeared that sixty persons had been done away with by means of the falling floor. Both the murderers eventually suffered the extreme penalties of the law of that period.

On the credit of the above story the ghost of Thomas Cole enjoyed for centuries a magnificent notoriety, strutting proudly at midnight along the corridors and terrifying any unfortunate occupant of the Blue Chamber out of his wits. But the historical critic has found him out. There was no cloth trade either in Reading, Gloucester, or Worcester, when Henry I was king, nor was Thomas à Beckett a friend of his, nor did the Blue Chamber itself exist, indeed there were no beds

invented for ages afterwards. Colnbrook is not so called because "Cole was in the Brook" as was pretended, nor did the river Colne receive that name because Cole was in it. If the shade of Mr. Cole has not fled away altogether, it takes care to hide its diminished head in some dark corner or cupboard. For at least ten years this detected impostor has not shown himself in the Blue Chamber. As a matter of fact, the *Ostrich* was a hospice founded by Milo Crispin about 1130, and given in trust to the Benedictines at Abingdon.

About two hundred years ago the owners of the *Hind's Head* at Bracknell tried to emulate the exploits of their rivals at Colnbrook. One winter's night a stout-hearted farmer was benighted there and spent a merry evening round the fire with some jovial companions. At last a serving-maid showed him up to his chamber. In a scared whisper she warned him that he had taken refuge with a band of villains. By the side of the bedstead was a trap-door leading into a deep well. He threw the bed down the trap-door and escaped by the window. Then he roused the neighbourhood. The gang of ruffians were captured and all executed at Reading. In the well were found the bones of all their victims.

The *Hind's Head* is a pleasant little inn, with a fine old garden, and we have slept in the haunted room—slept the sleep of the just undisturbed by visitors of any kind. But we have hopes of the *Hind's Head,* for the present occupier is a man of taste, who believes that behind the modern wainscot ingle-nooks and other treasures of the old time are waiting to be unveiled. The trap-door and the well are to be seen *in situ,* and perhaps when the old-fashioned appearance of the interior is restored, the ghosts may be induced to return.

On the western end of Exmoor there is an old inn, the *Acland Arms,* which supernatural visitants have rendered uninhabitable. It lies deserted and melancholy, with its ruined porch and the broken walls of its weed-choked garden. The wraith of Farmer Mole haunts its precincts. He was returning from South Molton market one dark night on a horse laden with sacks of lime. Many years afterwards horse and man were dug out of the bog close by, into which they must have wandered in the mist and become engulfed.

For the tale of the " Hand of Glory " we are indebted to Mrs. Katherine Macquoid, and

will let it be told in her own words, with only a few abbreviations.[1]

The *Spital Inn* on Stanmore in Yorkshire, was, in the year 1797, a long narrow building kept by one George Alderson. Its lower storey was used as stabling, for the stage-coaches changed horses at the inn ; the upper part was reached by a flight of ten or twelve steps leading up from the road to a stout oaken door, and the windows, deeply recessed in the thick walls, were strongly barred with iron.

One stormy October night, while the rain swept pitilessly against the windows and the fierce gusts made the casements rattle, George Alderson and his son sat over the crackling log fire and talked of their gains at Broughton Hill Fair ; these gains, representing a large sum of money, being safely stowed away in a cupboard in the landlord's bedroom. A knock at the door interrupted them.

" Open t' door, lass," said Alderson. " Ah wadna keep a dog out sik a neet as this."

" Eh ! best slacken t' chain, lass," said the more cautious landlady.

The girl went to the door, but when she saw that the visitor was an old woman, she bade

[1] " About Yorkshire."

her come in. There entered a bent figure dressed in a long cloak and hood; this last was drawn over her face and, as she walked feebly to the armchair which Alderson pushed forward, the rain streamed from her clothing and made a pool on the oaken floor. She shivered violently but refused to take off her cloak and have it dried. She also refused the offer of food or a bed. She said she was on her way to the south, and must start as soon as there was daylight. All she needed was a rest beside the fire.

The innkeeper and his wife were well used to wayfarers; they soon said "Good-night," and went to bed; so did their son. Bella, the maid, was left alone with the shivering old woman, who gave but surly answers to her advances, and the girl fancied that the voice, though low, was not a woman's. Presently the wayfarer stretched out her feet to warm them, and Bella's quick eyes saw under the hem of the skirt that the stranger wore horseman's gaiters. The girl felt uneasy, and instead of going to bed, she resolved to stay up and watch.

Presently Bella lay down on a long settle beyond the range of the firelight and watched the stranger while she pretended to fall asleep.

The "Greyhound" Inn, Stroud

All at once the figure in the chair stirred, raised its head and listened; then it rose slowly to its feet, no longer bent but tall and powerful looking; it stood listening for some time. There was no sound but Bella's heavy breathing, and the wind and rain beating on the windows. Then the woman took from the folds of her cloak a brown withered human hand; next she produced a candle, lit it from the fire, and placed it in the hand. Bella's heart beat so fast that she could hardly keep up the regular deep breathing of pretended sleep; but now she saw the stranger coming towards her with this ghastly chandelier, and she closed her lids tightly. She felt that the woman was bending over her, and that the light was passed slowly before her eyes, while these words were muttered in the strong masculine voice that had first roused her suspicions:

"Let those who rest more deeply sleep;
Let those awake their vigils keep."

The light moved away, and through her eyelashes Bella saw that the woman's back was turned to her, and that she was placing the hand in the middle of the long oak table, while she muttered this rhyme:

"O Hand of Glory, shed thy light;
Direct us to our spoil to-night."

Then she moved a few steps away and undrew the window curtains. Coming back to the latter she said:

"Flash out thy light, O skeleton hand,
And guide the feet of our trusty band."

At once the light shot up a bright vivid gleam, and the woman walked to the door; she took down the bar, drew back the bolts, unfastened the chain, and Bella felt a keen blast of cold night air rush in as the door was flung open. She kept her eyes closed, however, for the woman at that moment looked at her, and then drawing something from her gown, she blew a long shrill whistle; she then went out at the door and down a few of the steps, stopped and whistled again, but the next moment a vigorous push sent her spinning down the steps on to the road below. The door was closed, barred and bolted, and Bella almost flew to her master's bedroom and tried to wake him. In vain, he and his wife slept on, while their snores sounded loudly through the house. The girl felt frantic.

She then tried to rouse young Alderson, but he slept as if in a trance. Now a fierce

battery on the door and cries below the windows told that the band had arrived.

A new thought came to Bella. She ran back to the kitchen. There was the Hand of Glory, still burning with a wonderful light. The girl caught up a cup of milk that stood on the table, dashed it on the flame and extinguished it. In one moment, as it seemed to her, she heard footsteps coming from the bedrooms, and George Alderson and his son rushed into the room with firearms in their hands. As soon as the robbers heard the landlord's voice bidding them depart, they summoned him to open the door, and produce his valuables. Meanwhile young Alderson had opened the window, and for answer he fired his blunderbuss down among the men below.

There was a groan—a fall—then a pause, and, as it seemed to the besieged, a sort of discussion. Then a voice called out, "Give up the Hand of Glory, and we will not harm you."

For answer young Alderson fired again and the party drew off. Seemingly they had trusted entirely to the Hand of Glory, or else they feared a long resistance, for no further attack was made. The withered hand

remained in the possession of the Aldersons for sixteen years after.

This story, concludes Mrs. Macquoid, was told to my informant, Mr. Atkinson, by Bella herself when she was an old woman.

The Ship, Wingham

CHAPTER XIV

OLD INNS AND THEIR ARCHITECTURE

ALTHOUGH many of our country inns must in their structural substance date from the reigns of Edward III and Richard II, and some, like the *Red Lion* at Wingham, and the *White Hart* at Newark, possess features that are without doubt fourteenth-century work, the earliest examples worthy of extended description and classification date from the middle of the fifteenth century. The enormous development of trade, and the wealth of the towns at this period, occasioned the building of hostelries so magnificent in size and so well adapted for comfort that they have often served through the strain and stress of coaching days. Some of these inns are well worthy of being compared with the grand parish churches which the same age has bequeathed to us.

Hidden behind a corner of the market-place at Aylesbury is the noble old *King's Head*, presenting to a narrow turning its broad mullioned windows and Tudor entrance

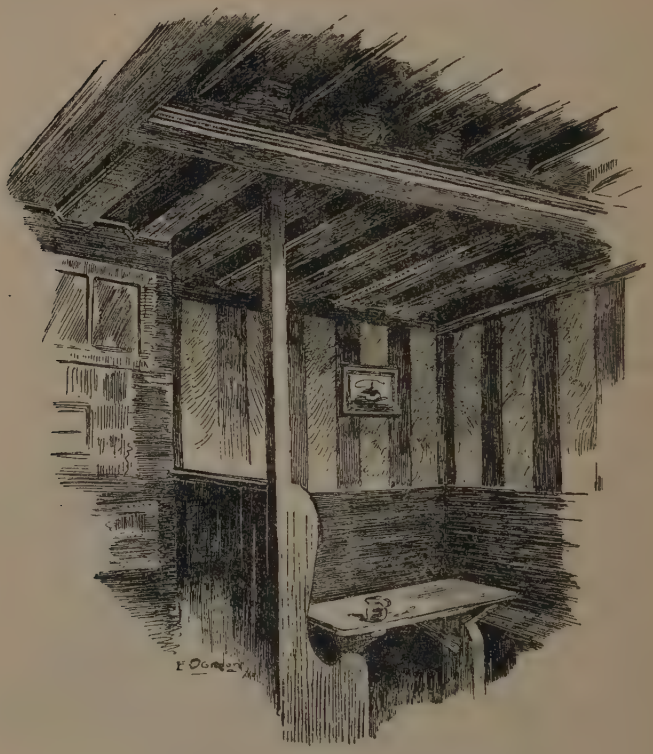
King's Head, Aylesbury

gateway. The interior has an open spacious staircase, and a lofty tap-room with massive oak cornice, and moulded ceiling-ribs meeting in a carved boss. It is lighted by a magnificent window, the ancient stained glass in which represents the arms of England and France quartered, the arms of Margaret of Anjou, and numerous heraldic and ecclesiastical symbols. A strong opinion exists that this house was a refectory for the Grey Friars; others have suggested that it was a hall of one of the town Guilds, built soon after the marriage of Henry VI, in 1444. With regard to the glass, there is some question whether it was not brought hither from some other position, especially as one of the heraldic shields has been reversed during insertion. But the whole apartment remains very much in its original state except that the chimney piece is ordinary and modern.

The yard of the old *King's Head* is still a busy picturesque one on market days, but the scene has lost a delightful background since the removal of the old galleries.

Even finer in its carvings and the richly-moulded cornice and ceiling beams is the great hall in the *Bull* at Long Melford. Probably this is a little earlier in date than the

Aylesbury house. Unfortunately, the beauty of this exquisite hall is marred by glass partitions



Tap-room at the Bull, Sudbury

and modern wall decoration of an inferior quality. Three miles away at Sudbury there is another *Bull* also of Edwardian date, full

of quaint nooks and retaining its original front, altered only by the insertion of a few eighteenth-century window frames. It stands near the site of an old friary, but we are inclined to believe that it owes its name, not to a monastic origin, but to the Black Bull of the House of Clarence.

Other fine old inns of this period are the *New Inn* at Gloucester, built by Abbot Seabrook from the designs of John Twyning, a monk ; the *Sun* at Feering in Essex, formerly a manor-house ; and the *George* at Glastonbury, unique in the possession of its original stone front, bold oriels and richly-traceried windows. The *Crown* at Shipton-under-Wychwood has a fine archway in the Perpendicular style and also some mullioned windows.

Nearer London is the *White Hart* at Brentwood. "There are few hostelries in England," says Albert Smith, "into which a traveller would sooner turn for entertainment for himself and animal than that of the *White Hart*, whose effigy looks placidly along the principal street from his lofty bracket, secured thereto by a costly gilt chain, which assuredly prevents him from jumping down and plunging into the leafy glades and

coverts within view. And when you enter the great gate, there is a friendly look in the old carved gallery running above the yard, which speaks of comfort and hospitality; you think at once of quiet chambers; beds into which you dive, and sink at least three feet down, for their very softness; with sweet, clean, country furniture, redolent of lavender. The pantry, too, is a thing to see, not so much for the promise of refection which it discloses, as for its blue Dutch tiles, with landscapes thereon, where gentlemen of meditative minds, something between Quakers and British yeomen, are walking about in wonderful coats, or fishing in troubled waters; all looking as if they were very near connections of the celebrated pedestrian, Christian, as he appeared in the old editions of 'The Pilgrim's Progress.'" And the *White Hart* at Brentwood remains a treasure among old inns, although fate has not been kind to it during the sixty years since little Fred Scattersgood found shelter there when running away from persecution at Merchant Taylors' School. Depressed Tudor arches, framed in dark oak, open into each of its two great yards, and an early Tudor arcading forms the front of the gallery, a retreat from which the fair dames of

"The King's Head," Loughton, Essex

Brentwood were wont to watch the cock-fightings. Just inside the principal entrance will be found some excellent renaissance woodwork.

At Alfriston, in Sussex, is the *Star Inn*, small in size, but of the highest interest. On brackets on each side of the doorway are mitred figures of St. Giles with a hind and St. Julian, the patrons of weary wayfarers. A beam in the parlour is ornamented with a shield and the sacred monogram, and all kinds of curious carvings abound in the building. In the dining-room upstairs, suggestive of an old ship's cabin, the solid construction of the fine old roof may be studied. For four centuries it has borne its coverings of thick Horsham stone slabs without shifting, and seems sound enough to resist time for a long period to come. Antiquarians have supposed this inn to have been erected as a pilgrim's hostel, but it seems scarcely probable that voyagers, even if they landed at Seaford, would take this route either to Canterbury or Chichester. It belonged to the Abbey of Battle, and the many ecclesiastical carvings may be ascribed to the monkish craftsmen. Just above a facetious, smiling lion thickly bedaubed with red paint, and evidently the

figure-head of a ship stranded on this dangerous coast, is the carver's mark showing the date of the building. A rude heraldic design on the angle bracket, represents a coronetted ragged staff supported by a bear and a lion with a twisted tail. In 1495, Edmund Dudley married Elizabeth Grey, last heiress of Warwick the "King-maker." The union of the Green Lion with the Bear and Ragged Staff was a great event for the Sussex people. Edmund Dudley was brought up at Lewes Priory, and the hillfolk were proud of his success in becoming the chief minister of his time.

The *Maid's Head* at Norwich, so far as the older part of this excellent house is concerned, is chiefly Elizabethan and early Jacobean; thanks to the careful restoration and the valuable collection of old furniture introduced by Mr. Walter Rye, much of the interior helps us to realise what an old inn looked like two or three centuries ago. But the *Maid's Head* has a more ancient history, and can boast of a Norman cellar (a relic of the Bishop's Palace), while in the drawing-room, a real fifteenth-century fireplace, discovered in the thickness of the wall, has been opened up and correctly fitted with dogs and hood.

Sun Inn, Feering

The panelled billiard-room, cosy Jacobean bar, and the music gallery in the assembly room (like the "Elevated Den" in the *Bull* at Rochester), are all delightful. The only fault we can find at the *Maid's Head* is that the old inn-yard, now converted into a lounge, has been roofed in with glass at too low a level. A much better effect would have been attained by introducing the glazed protection high above the galleries, as has been done in the yard of the *Rose and Crown* at Sudbury.

Another Elizabethan inn of note is the *Star* at Great Yarmouth, built by a local merchant, William Crowe, at the end of the sixteenth century. Here the Nelson Room, so called from a famous portrait of Lord Nelson, is beautifully panelled in dark oak. When the match-boarding was torn down for repairs about forty years ago the original fireplace and chimney-piece were discovered and restored. Over the mantel are the arms of the Merchant Adventurers who received their charters from Queen Elizabeth.

The exact date of the *Feathers* at Ludlow is not very easy to determine, but it must have existed before 1609, when Rees Jones took a lease of the premises; and the initials

"R. I." on the lockplate probably refer to him. The splendid carved front with a gallery of spiral balusters, the studded door, elaborate ceilings, fireplaces and panelling are, of course, well known to all students, and illustrated in every collection. In 1616, there was a celebration in Ludlow of "The Love of Wales to their Sovereign Prince"; and from this event the inn must have received its name. It is the finest of all the *Magpie* half-timbered inns of Cheshire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire. By the time these lines are in print the famous "Globe Room" at the *Reindeer* at Banbury will have been exported to America, but a replica in all respects is to be erected in its place. A copy of the ceiling is already at the South Kensington Museum.

Many of the great coaching inns of the Queen Anne and Georgian eras are not lacking in good proportion and correct classic detail. But they lack the individuality of the very old inns, and a long description of them would interest only the purely architectural stuentd. The artist will find effects of colour and lighting in the mouldering brick cornices at Godalming or Sittingbourne. The old ballrooms in county towns, now deserted for the modern Town Hall, and made to do duty as store

rooms, are always worth peeping into; and little survivals of our forefathers' habits of life are to be detected in the broad staircases and deep easy window seats. Hotel architecture continued to follow the fashion, and even the Greek revival early in the last century and the later Italian revival had their influence.

Some very curious examples of the Sir Charles Barry period are to be noted in the neighbourhood of the Crystal Palace. Fifty years of wear might make us forgive some of their eccentricities. Among these, one of the best from the architectural point of view, is the little *Goat House Hotel* in South Norwood, so named from a famous goat-breeding establishment which existed on an island of the Croydon Canal. The portico, cluster of narrow round-headed windows and slender Lombardic tower of this building are not bad, albeit hopelessly exotic. At least they show an attempt at artistic purpose during the years when public-house design was generally mechanical and sordid.

For the very queerest adaptation by a local builder of the style in vogue during the Greek revival, a visit must be paid to the *Lisle Castle*, on the Dover Road, about three miles beyond Gravesend.

The Noah's Ark, Lurgashall

Old wayside inns, as a rule, have few architectural pretensions ; good sound proportion, breadth of roof, bold chimney breasts, and age together suffice to make them attractive and dignified. Internally the tap-rooms are often panelled, and the ceilings crossed by many smoke-stained beams ; with here and there a welcome chimney-corner. Ingle-nooks and chimney-corners are still fairly numerous even in the home counties. Surrey can boast of a good half-dozen ; *The Plough* at Smallfield, near Red Hill, the *Crown* at Chiddingfold, the *White Lion* at Warlingham, may be given as instances—while there are more than one in that fine old Elizabethan inn, the *Clayton Arms*, formerly the *White Hart* at Godstone. Leaves Green and Groombridge own two out of the many scattered about Kent. In Sussex they are too common to require special notice.

CHAPTER XV

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

THE genuine traveller is really the man who is on business. Even the tourist can scarcely lay confident claim to the title. Is he not on pleasure bent ? Is he not going from place to place merely for the fun of the thing ? Is he not really a stay-at-home who has ventured out merely to stretch his legs ? Ask the keeper of a commercial hotel in a country town who his customers are. He will tell you that they are commercial *travellers* and coffee-room *visitors*. The two classes are distinct in the mind of mine host. One suggests work, the other play. The commercial man is bound to travel whether he likes it or not, the visitor is a fitful amateur amusing himself by a change from the monotony of home.

Whoso looks upon the commercial traveller as a modern production created by the railway system should listen to the explosion of wrath from an old hand on the road, who has had time and inclination to examine into the

history of commerce. "What, no traditions!" he will exclaim. "Permit me to call your attention once more, my friend, to the parable of the Good Samaritan. Who was he, I I should like to know, but a commercial traveller? Everything points to it. He was travelling in oil and wine, why else should he have had them with him? Notice his influence with the host of the inn. He was evidently known there. He could give instructions and had enough ready money to leave two denarii on his departure, with a reminder that he would be coming again later on. Then, again, his broad-minded sympathy, he was certainly no sectarian. Commercial travellers rarely are. Their calling teaches them to be friendly to all sorts and conditions of men. No traditions? History is full of incidents which show that the man who travels with samples is as old as the hills."

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth century it was the bagman who used the inn. Not a term of opprobrium this by any means. Think of the immediate forerunner of the present-day commercial, sitting astride a sturdy horse with a well-stocked bag on each side, facing all weathers, negotiating

all roads, and making a journey of a month or two at a time. Not an altogether despicable figure this. There would be nothing squeamish about his methods, perhaps; but he would be equally welcome to his customers and mine host as a carrier of news or a purveyor of goods. He travelled horseback because the roads he had to go over were not always suitable for vehicles. It was not till Macadam that the light spring-cart became an essential part of his equipment.

Long after the commencement of railways the commercial traveller was known as a bagman. The *Daily Telegraph*, in the year 1865, seemed in doubt as to whether its readers would recognize the more modern name without some explanation, for it refers to "a traveller—I mean a bagman, not a tourist—arriving with his samples at a provincial town." At that time, of course, commercial travellers were increasing in numbers; but inasmuch as railways only connected up towns on certain routes, the light cart was used constantly to go the round of outlying districts. Indeed, to-day, there are commercial travellers who still use the older method of progress for work in parts of

counties where railway communication is poor and the service of trains intermittent. The motor-car is also an occasional means of conveyance for travellers. When first it was so used, tradesmen looked askance at it as being likely to frighten the horses of carriage customers.

The country inn began to cater specially for business men early in the nineteenth century, and the establishment of the commercial room was the ultimate result of the special accommodation which innkeepers offered to travellers.

Let no unwary casual visitor, even to-day, imagine that all rooms except the bedchambers of an inn in a country town are open to him. The commercial room is a private apartment reserved for privileged representatives of business concerns. A ritual has grown up which is strictly observed by those whose right it is to make use of its many conveniences. Notice the formality of greeting which a late comer extends to the president of the table at the one o'clock dinner. "Mr. President, may I be permitted to join you?" or "Mr. President, may I have the honour of joining this company?" "With pleasure, sir." The head of the table invites the company to join

The "Fox and Pelican" Inn, Haslemere

him at wine. "Well, gentlemen, what do you say to a bottle of sherry to begin with?" And later on—"Now gentlemen, suppose we have a bottle of port." Here is indicated a spaciousness of life, a dignity and ease which the rapid pushful customs of to-day are hustling into the past. But although the long wine dinners in the commercial room, where every traveller was considered good for at least a pint, are almost over, the ceremonial is still to a great extent kept up. At one time not so long ago, a diner paid for his share of the wine consumed whether he drank it or not; but the spread of teetotalism, the establishment of Temperance Hotels and the gradual curtailment of the time spent on dinner, as well as the keen competition which compelled every man on the road to make as much of the afternoon as he did of the morning, led to a freer personal liberty in the consumption of and payment for liquor. Nowadays, a commercial traveller orders and pays for what he likes. There is a generally understood rule that the traveller longest in the hotel shall officiate as president, and should an entirely fresh set of arrivals enter the commercial room at dinner-time, the first to come in takes the head of the table as

president, or chairman, as he is more commonly called to-day. The custom of toasting the Sovereign at dinner, at one time common, has now fallen into disuse. In places where the Sunday commercial dinner is still an institution—return tickets on the railways at a single fare, and express trains have largely done away with it—the old time formalities are still kept up, for Sunday is a day which admits of plenty of leisure and opportunity for ceremonial. Grace used to be pronounced by the president, and a story goes that on one occasion—perchance on many subsequent occasions—at a suggestion from one of the diners that Mr. President should "now say grace," the head of the table arose and inquired, "Is there a clergyman present? No? Thank God," and resumed his seat.

One good custom which still survives and is likely to do so, is the penny collection in the Commercial Room for the Commercial Travellers' Schools and the Commercial Travellers' Benevolent Association. This collection is taken daily at every dinner in the commercial room all over the country, and it is largely from the proceeds that these institutions are supported. A sidelight on

custom may be observed in the fact that in many hotels now the collection is taken at breakfast to ensure every traveller being present. The midday dinner became less well attended, and this led to a serious diminution in the receipts when once travellers began to use restaurants and take advantage of local travelling facilities to visit customers at some distance from headquarters. It is common for the landlord of the inn to take charge of the money collected. The president of the table enters the amount, divided into equal portions into two books and fixes his initials, the proprietor of the establishment, on the annual remittance to the Association, receiving a votes allotment which can be utilized on behalf of any applicants for the privileges of the two philanthropic bodies.

No one is permitted to smoke in the commercial room until after 9 p.m., a rule which is observed far more strictly than those unacquainted by actual experience with the traveller's life might think. The custom of using slippers of the inn, which indispensable "Boots" keeps often at his own expense, is peculiar to the commercial room, though many travellers now carry their own foot wear for the fireside with them. At the

Red Horse,[1] Stratford-on-Avon, "Boots" is credited with having as fine a selection of comfortable slippers as is to be found in the kingdom.

Convenience for those who use the room led to the provision of a big table in the centre, with small writing-tables round the walls. In old inns this simple method of furnishing is still retained; but more pretentious establishments now have a separate writing-room. Upon the landlord rests the responsibility of providing many small details in equipment, such as books of reference, time-tables, ink-stands, paper and pens. At the *Old Steyne Hotel*, Brighton, the landlord—himself an old Commercial—even goes to the length of providing an open box of penny and halfpenny stamps which travellers may take from as they will, paying for what they use by placing the money in another box which stands close by. Probably in no other room of an inn could such a convenience be extended without abuse. At

[1] Larwood and Hotten, in "The History of Sign-boards," state that the sign of the *Red Horse* in their day was almost extinct. Longfellow's description of "The Wayside Inn" contains the lines:

> "And half effaced by rain and shine,
> The red horse prances on the sign."

the same hotel a special stand of well-selected canes is always kept for travellers who may wish to use them in their walks of relaxation on the front.

Beyond these small matters of detail of equipment the commercial room has little of interest. Hear the description of the author of "The Ambassadors of Commerce," who prefaces what he has to say with the remark that "the cosiness and comfort of the commercial room in the old-fashioned hotel are by no means due to its architectural form, its size, ventilation, or adaptation to its special purposes—most of them having none of these requisites—but to its association," etc. . . . . "The room itself is not hung with choice works of art in either oil or water colours." We seem, by the way, to have seen many a terrible old oleograph. "The proprietor being more desirous of advertising noted whiskys and popular bitter ales, he covers his walls with framed advertisements of these beverages. These, with a coloured print of the Commercial Travellers' Schools at Pinner, and a notice of the dinner hour, complete the picture. Add to the same a dozen or more half-dried overcoats, mackintoshes, whips, rugs, hats of all conceivable

shapes, and you have some idea of the ornamentations and fine art decoration of an old-fashioned commercial room." Not an altogether unattractive picture either. It smacks of the old mid-Victorian times when mahogany and horsehair were the chief stock in trade of the furnisher. A day may come when this much abused combination of woodwork and upholstery will be sought after. Stranger things have happened. Mahogany and horsehair chairs and sofas are rapidly approaching that age limit beyond which they will certainly become interesting, and one can see in imagination the advertisements of the second-hand dealers who will describe them as "genuinely old." In that day many an old commercial room will be made to yield up its treasures to the insatiable greed of collectors. It is not uncommon, however, to find odd pieces of eighteenth-century furniture in the travellers' room to-day. We have come across several old sideboards which were obviously of not later date than Sheraton's time, though in all probability the famous cabinet-maker had but little to do with their origin.

It is the experience of most commercial travellers that the temperance hotel, quite

apart from the fact that it supplies no alcoholic liquors, is only very rarely comparable to the fully-licensed house. Tradition may have something to do with the comfort of the old inn, and temperance hotels have no traditions whatever. Their inception was due to a protest, and even to-day, with the temperance movement so well understood and appreciated, the " hotels " which advertise themselves as being dogmatically averse to a particular form of refreshment, more often than not seem unable adequately to provide comforts about which there can be no question whatever. We have known many temperance hotels which began with a flourish of trumpets and a long list of influential patrons ; a few years later they had become slovenly, disreputable, and even in one or two cases, immoral. An inn may have peculiarities, it may have character through history and old associations, but one thing it should certainly never possess, and that is a narrow shibboleth.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NEW INN AND ITS POSSIBILITIES

WHATEVER developments may be in store in the future will depend almost entirely as to how far the licensing authorities and the various bodies formed for the purpose of furthering the cause of temperance, to say nothing of trade protection societies, can sink their differences and come to some sort of understanding as to the best type of inn for public convenience. Some temperance reformers have dreamt of a land without public-houses, and even to-day it is not at all uncommon to hear a lecturer in his enthusiasm for the cause of total abstinence express the wish that every drop of intoxicating liquor in the country could be run into the sewers to-morrow, and every public-house at the same time have its shutters put up. Of course such a dream is impossible of fulfilment, and by far the bulk of English people are heartily glad it is so. On the other hand, there is a small body of opinion which thinks that public-house licences should be dispensed with

altogether, that anybody should be permitted to sell intoxicating spirits if he thinks fit, and that the removal of restriction would tend towards temperance. This also is a condition of things which is not in the range of practical politics.

What, however, does seem a hopeful possibility is that a middle course should become more generally accepted in the direction of improvement of public-houses and their conduct, not for the sake of "the trade" on the one hand, nor for the temperance societies on the other, but for the benefit of the public. On the whole, the number of people, even in the temperance ranks, who look upon the public-house as of the devil, to be destroyed wherever possible, is very small, and it is also fair to say that among publicans the attitude of mind which regards the possession of a licence as merely permission to sell as much intoxicating liquor as possible is becoming rarer every day. The trade has been forced, not without some grumbling, to recognize tea as a form of liquid refreshment which may legitimately be called for by the traveller; and although there are still, in out of the way country districts, wayside inns where the kettle never seems to boil, and,

according to the veracious landlord, no fire is ever kept up in the afternoon, it is usually easy to obtain tea on demand in most licensed houses. What has led to this no doubt is the discovery that tea may be provided at a profit.

Of late years traffic on the turnpike road has become thicker and thicker. But the travellers of to-day are not those of a hundred or even fifty years ago, any more than they are the pilgrims of the thirteenth century. No use offering them strong ale for breakfast or rum punch at every halt. As well might one hawk the metal charms which found such ready sale seven hundred years ago on the great roads to holy shrines. The modern pilgrim comes on motor-car and bicycle and the relic of his trip is the nimble picture post-card. Of course, one must not forget that the country inn is not entirely kept up as a convenience to travellers. It must minister besides to the permanent residents of the neighbourhood. The regular customer must be studied, and he has the comforts of home near by. He does not appear to want them in the bar of the *Blue Lion* or *George the Fourth.* Sufficient for him if he find civility and an opportunity of discussing a tankard of

ale and a pipe in company with his friends. But for all that, travellers continue to increase and the faster they go the quicker they come.

A motorist or cyclist thinks nothing of an extra mile or two in search of good cheer. This is a point which may well be commended to landlords of inns which are not in the direct line of traffic. The number of people, too, who take a positive pleasure in going out of their way to search for unfrequented hostelries is on the increase. Motor-cars have to a great extent driven cyclists on to the by-roads, and in planning a tour the rider of the humbler machine will take any amount of trouble to avoid main roads in his anxiety to avoid dust and obtain peace and quietness. This tends to increase the popularity of half-forgotten inns in remoter districts. Where a generation ago the advent of a traveller from a distance was an event to be remembered, nowadays the ubiquitous motorist and cyclist may turn up any moment. It is to the interest, therefore, of rural innkeepers to study him.

Another fact to be remembered, is the increase in the number of lady travellers on the roads, and ladies quite rightly will not

stand any sort of makeshift accommodation. Where a man will thankfully accept his pot of beer and bread and cheese in an evil smelling bar parlour, a woman will prefer to sit under a tree outside and do without refreshment until it can be obtained in reasonable cleanliness and comfort. Women, as a rule, travel under the protection of men, and depend upon their escort for the discovery of nice places in which to take meals. Men, therefore, have to find them, and many a little inn which might profit by frequent parties of both sexes is passed by in favour of a more pretentious establishment further on, not because the accommodation is not extensive and elaborate at the smaller place, but because of lack of cleanliness, plain reasonable fare, and some attention to the amenities of life.

Quite a small thing will turn a lady traveller against a wayside inn. Those horrible, narrow swing doors, which are only too common, are quite enough to make a woman decide against the inn which is so unfortunate as to have them barring the only entrance. No man ever pushed through such doors with dignity, and a woman feels instinctively that to struggle with them involves almost a loss

of self-respect. A woman likes to *enter* a house. She does not like to slip in furtively, and she feels, perhaps unconsciously, that there is a hint of the surreptitious in these doors in the way they open just wide enough on pressure and close again immediately as if to hide a misdemeanour. No woman, either, will stand and drink even the mildest of non-alcoholic liquors if she can possibly help it. She prefers to sit down. The ordinary bar, therefore, has no attractions for her. Even in a railway refreshment room, where hurry excuses most things, a woman will only stand under compulsion. It is not that she really wants to sit down through weariness, for she may have been sitting for hours in a railway carriage. But she has an instinct for propriety and conduct. If tea shops, which are so largely patronized by women, had a high bar like public-houses, with as little sitting accommodation, as is often to be found in licensed establishments, they could not possibly keep open. Why it should be customary to stand up to drink a glass of beer and sit down to take a cup of tea is a mystery.

Let us admit and welcome the efforts of the old Georgian coaching inns to keep abreast of the times. Let us cheerfully accept the

attempts of mine host to put life into an old musty coffee-room and bar parlour. Conservatism is not without value at the inn with a history, and the landlord for his own sake must step warily. Let no iconoclast interfere too violently with the worm-eaten glories of old oak and mahogany or seek to disparage the solid virtues of the great round of beef, or the appetising ingredients of the game pie. Tradition in such things is well worth preserving.

But it is the licensed house which never had much of a history, which has nothing interesting to preserve, whose justification for existence is solely on account of its use to the community as a house of call, that so often requires alteration. The new inn, moreover, the building itself, erected here in the twentieth century for the accommodation of modern people, must be as suitable for its purpose as the old coaching-house was for the stiff, befuddled travellers who, a hundred years ago, alighted from the "Royal Mail" or "Eclipse" for a much-needed night's repose on their journey to London. It is plain that people use the roads to-day quite as much for pleasure as business. The railway takes the business man from one end of England to

the other, faster, cheaper, and more comfortably than even the motor-car has yet achieved on the turnpike. Relaxation from work means for many thousands a journey by road, and it is in making suitable preparation for those who take their pleasure in this way that the new inn should devote at least half of its energies. The time may not be ripe in England for the adoption of the café system of the Continent. Perhaps the climate is somewhat against it. But some improvements, which a study of the French and German methods would suggest, might easily be taken in hand. The argument of the old teetotaller, not always expressed, perhaps, but certainly present, was that the more uncomfortable and disreputable the public-house the less temptation there would be to go into it. One can understand the point of view as with an effort one can realise the horror of the Puritans for anything in the form of an image in a Church. But people do not want nowadays to use the inn as a place in which to get drunk ; a drunken man, to say nothing of a drunken woman, is a universal object of pity and scorn. What is demanded is a wholesome, clean and pleasant place in which to have something to eat and drink without being

told by anyone, publican or teetotaller, what form the refreshment shall take.

Herein is one of the reasons for the movement in favour of reformed public-houses. The People's Refreshment House Association, Ltd., which has now over seventy public-houses under its management in different parts of the country has shown how licensed premises may be improved and made to pay at the same time. Proof of this is to be found in the balance-sheet of the Association which has shown a regular annual payment of its maximum dividend of five per cent. since 1899, with over £1,000 placed to reserve. Of course, the Association is frankly a temperance body, but it would be just as well if those people who shy at the idea of public-houses becoming controlled by bigotry would consult the dictionary and discover for themselves the real meaning of the word temperance. Having done so, they will, perhaps, realise that in pursuit of moderation there is no reason whatever why the interests of "the trade," the reformer, and the public should not be identical, for all these prefer the temperate man to the drunkard. The fact that about 80 per cent. of the licensed houses of England are tied to brewers should not stand

The "White Horse" Inn, Stetchworth, Newmarket

in the way of improvement ; indeed, in some cases, particularly in the provision and upkeep of suitable premises, brewers have done more than could possibly be undertaken by private owners or the public-house Trusts of which, by the way, there is one now in nearly every county. Without going into the many vexed questions, most of which are matters for the trade alone, surrounding the tied house, it may not unreasonably be hoped that the brewer will see more and more in the future how his duty to the public and his interests alike demand a broader and more enlightened policy than the crude idea of monopoly of sale.

Improvements, however, cannot be entered upon with much hope of success without the sympathy of the licensing justices, and it is as much to be desired that they should recognize that the public interest lies in the direction of the reformed public-house as that the brewer should realise that licensed premises are not solely to be run as drinking shops. The restrictions in very many parts of England which have been put in the way of improvements and extensions are absurd. Wherever specially free facilities have been granted for the sale of intoxicating liquor—as at the White City in 1908—nothing has

resulted which in any way caused the authorities to regret having trusted the public not to make beasts of themselves. The Bill introduced by Lord Lamington in the House of Lords crystallised the views of reformers, who desire to make the public-house more attractive. It provided that licensing justices should not interfere with the provision of accommodation for the supply of tea, coffee, cocoa, or food; with the substitution of chairs and tables for bars; with the provision of games, newspapers, music, or gardens, or any other means of reasonable recreation. It also asked that the Licensing Bench should allow the improvements of premises in the direction of making them more open and airy than at present and more healthy generally. There are numerous cases in which the action of justices in refusing to grant facilities for improvement has been almost incomprehensible, and amply justified the implied rebuke contained in the Bill. In London the continental café—or rather an English adaptation of the idea—has been established with success, and though the metropolis is commonly judged by other standards than those of the countryside, the way in which the café has been received seems

to indicate not only the desire for freer and more enlightened management, but also the possession by the public of sufficient moral fibre to make use of the increased facilities temperately and in reason.

New inns have been erected in recent years —not many of them it is true—with the object of supplying the wants of to-day in a liberal and broad-minded way. Occasionally the assistance of architects of acknowledged position has been enlisted in making the buildings themselves more attractive and less vulgar than has been only too common, and if the effect of environment upon morality and behaviour counts for anything these new inns should be an improvement in every way upon the bulk of those built at any rate during the Victorian period. The inn at Sandon, on Lord Harrowby's estate, may be mentioned as a case in point. The *Fox and Pelican* at Haslemere, the architects of which were Messrs. Read and Macdonald, is another, which has, by the way, a sign painted by Mr. Walter Crane. There is the *Skittles Inn* at Letchworth, designed by Messrs. R. Barry Parker, and Raymond Unwin. In this last instance the conditions under which the building was erected were much easier than

those which commonly obtain in older settled districts, where many interests have to be considered. At Garden City the question regarding the sale of alcoholic liquors is one on which there is considerable divergence of view. About the necessity for providing a well-designed and conducted house for the general refreshment of travellers and as a centre for social intercourse there would appear, however, to have been no doubt whatever. The *Skittles* is referred to here simply as a nicely-planned building of very attractive appearance which seems to embody most of the improvements one would wish to see in the design of modern inns. The architects have contrived cleverly to combine the idea of the continental café and the English country inn. The rooms are large and airy, there is plenty of seating accommodation, and a billiard-room is one of the attractions. There is an entire absence of ornamental decoration, a form of embellishment which still continues to appear in nine out of every ten newly equipped public-houses, in the country as well as in towns. Of course, it is perfectly plain that with a new house of refreshment which is not to hold a licence, anything may be done. Directly an architect

is commissioned to design a fully-licensed inn his difficulties commence. He is hedged about by all sorts of restrictions. It is inconceivable, however, that the cause of true temperance can be injured by the provision of a good, convenient building for a licensed victualler's trade, instead of the vulgar atrocity which is so common.

It is not at all certain that the classification of compartments such as saloon bar, private bar, public bar, tap-room, bar parlour, and so on, is not out of harmony with modern requirements. No doubt this division has its conveniences, in the same way that the three classes of compartments, which some railway companies still keep up is found on the whole of benefit. But, to take the café again as an illustration, there appears to be no necessity there for such rigid distinctions, and many of the greater railway companies have found no ill results from the total elimination of at least second class. Some of the new tube railways have only one class, and if one form of public convenience is found to answer without class distinction, why not another ?

Some of the new inns which have architectural character have been disfigured by flaring advertisements. The licensed trade

should know whether publicity of this kind given to particular brands of ale and spirits, on the whole contributes to the good of the house on which the announcements are displayed ; but there can be little doubt that one result is to vulgarize the building. In cases where the landlord of the property sets his face against advertising of this kind, the inn seems by contrast to proclaim its respectability and on that account must attract some custom, at all events. A very good building, as yet not spoilt by advertisements, is the *Bell*, on the high road between the *Wake Arms* and Epping, and another is the *White Horse*, Stetchworth, Newmarket, which Mr. C. F. A. Voysey designed for Lord Ellesmere. The *Wheatsheaf*, Loughton, is a new inn designed by Mr. Horace White, which is as yet free from objectionable signboards, and is a very good type of building for the smaller country public. There are also various good inns designed by Mr. P. Morley Horder, in Gloucestershire, and *The George and Dragon*, Castleton, erected some sixteen years ago, is a licensed house of excellent design, by Mr. W. Edgar Wood.

For a model wayside inn of the smaller class, where the internal treatment shows

good taste with the utmost simplicity commend us to the *White Hart* at West Wickham. It replaces a very ancient wooden house which had proved past repair, and is probably unique amongst modern inns in that it is designed for the convenient drawing of all the malt liquors direct from the wood. Another more ambitious house by the same architects (Messrs. Berney & Son) at Elmers End, with an elaborate half-timbered front, recalling Black Forest architecture, has anticipated the requirements of the Children's Act. The well-proportioned tea room is approached by a colonnade at the side of the building and isolated from the bars.

Among brewers who have had the foresight to erect inns of better accommodation and more pleasing design than most of those put up during the latter part of last century are Messrs. Godsell & Co., of Stroud, an example of whose houses we illustrate in the *Greyhound Inn ;* and the Stroud Brewery Co., whose *Prince Albert* at Rodborough, Gloucestershire, and the *Clothiers' Arms*, are excellent specimens of the modern country inn. These three were from the designs of Mr. P. Morley Horder. Good taste is by no means lacking in some of the many houses owned by Messrs.

Nalder & Collyer, Ltd., in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex. This firm have also restored the old-fashioned type of signboards.

Other inns of recent date and of distinctive design are the *Red Lion*, King's Heath, Worcestershire, by Messrs. Bateman & Bateman; the *Wentworth Arms*, Elmesthorpe, Leicestershire, by Mr. C. F. A. Voysey; the *George*, Hayes, Kent, by Mr. Ernest Newton; the *Duck-in-the-Pond*, Harrow Weald, by Mr. R. A. Briggs; the *Maynard Arms*, Bagworth, Leicester, by Messrs. Everard & Pick; the remodelled *White Hart* at Sonning-on-Thames, by Mr. W. Campbell Jones; the *Dog and Doublet*, Sandon; the *Hundred House*, Purslow, Shropshire (a modern reconstruction); the *Green Man*, Tunstall, Suffolk; the *Old White House* and the *Elm Tree* at Oxford, by Mr. Henry T. Hare; and various temperance inns, amongst which are the *Ossington Coffee House*, Newark, by Messrs. Ernest George & Yeates; the *Bridge Inn*, Port Sunlight, by Messrs. Grayson & Ould (now fully licensed); and the Bournville Estate public-house, by Mr. W. Alexander Harvey. In London two finely designed interiors are the *Coal Hole*, in the Strand, by Mr. W. Colcutt, and the *Copt Hall*, in Copthall Avenue, by Mr. P. Morley Horder.

CHAPTER XVII

INN FURNITURE

It will not come as any surprise to readers who have so far dipped with us into the pages of the past, to learn that mediæval inns, and indeed those of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, have very little to show in the way of furniture. Our ancestors had far less done for them when they put up for the night than we are accustomed to to-day in the most primitive districts. Travellers did not even expect a bed. They were thankful enough if they could get some sort of rough bedstead on which to lay their own bed which they brought with them. Of course, these were people of some means. Whenever Royalty travelled the train of waggons required to convey furnishing equipment frequently extended to formidable dimensions. On the other hand, the accumulation of wealth in the sixteenth century soon began to raise the standard of furnishing at the inn, and a diary kept by a Dutch physician named Levinus Lemnius, who made

an adventure into England during Elizabeth's reign, is worth quoting as an indication of the rapid improvement which was taking place. The good doctor evidently had not been used to luxuries, for he says: "The neate cleanliness, the exquisite fineness, the pleasaunte and delightful furniture in every poynt for the household, wonderfully rejoyced me, their nosegayes, finely entermingled with sundry sortes of fragreunte flowers in their bedchambers and privy roomes with comfortable smell cheered mee up and entirely delyghted all my sences." He probably stayed at the best hostelries which could be found, and it would be unwise to conclude that all inns of the period had so many charms as those to which he refers.

One feature of the furnishing of old inns which adds not a little to the picturesqueness of the interiors is the high-backed settle, with wings or arms. This is universal all over England. It varies considerably in different localities, for the local handicraftsman has worked according to tradition, and he has also in most cases made the settle for a particular place and to serve a special purpose. Of course, the original reason for its design was to keep out draughts from the constantly

opening door, and this purpose is still strong enough to make the settle a very convenient, not to say necessary, fixture in most inns, in spite of all sorts of modern draught-excluding devices. It scarcely seems likely that the high-backed settle will ever be entirely superseded. It is not particularly comfortable according to present-day ideas of comfort in seats, which seem to revolve round upholstery. But it is very clean. It will not harbour dust, and if well made it will stand the assaults of time for centuries. The old Elizabethan and Jacobean settles were extremely heavy. It was evident in those days that sturdiness was inseparable from strength, and considering the possible rough usage to which seats in the inn might well on occasion be put, the heavy timbers of which they were constructed seem to have been well advised. They very often had fine carving, and were constructed with the seat forming a lid to the boxed-in lower part. It was in the eighteenth century that settles became of little account, and they were then plainly made by carpenters simply to serve a useful purpose. There is a good example of a carved settle in the *Union Inn*, Flyford Flavel, Worcestershire ; and in many an old

inn in Berkshire, a county which has retained its ancient character perhaps more than any other, are heavy old oak settles guarding the warm fireside. In the tap-room of the *Green Dragon*, Combe St. Nicholas, near Chard, is a settle finely carved of fifteenth-century origin. Judging by its character it must at one time have been in some ecclesiastical building. The *Green Dragon* was monastic. The settle after a time developed into the fixed partition, its back stretched up to the ceiling, and a door was placed at the end, the partition being continued beyond to the opposite wall. Considerations of light sometimes prevented this being carried out entirely but a modern compromise was effected by glazing the screen above the high settle back and putting glass panels in the door. The development of the ingle-nook came about through chimney-corner and settle being combined in one feature.

The settle in some form or other is the best possible seat for the inn, particularly if space is limited. It might be pleasanter to have small tables and chairs, but in many an old building there is only enough room for a couple of long seats and a table. A long bench upon which people can sit in a row

The "Woodman" Inn, Farnborough, Kent

side by side is the best seat in existence for saving space. Light furniture is utterly unsuitable for inns. For one thing it is usually nothing like strong enough, and even if it be it commits an artistic sin in looking too fragile for its purpose. Take the respective merits of the very many forms in which the old Windsor chair has been made, and the modern bent-wood chair. Now the latter is without doubt the strongest seat for its weight which has been invented in modern times. It is one of the few successes in chair-making which can claim to be the direct outcome of scientific methods. It has absolutely no ancestors whatever, and can attach itself to no tradition. It is a bald product of the application of science to furniture, and when the Austrian inventor finally made it perfect he had achieved utility, nothing more, nothing less. The bent-wood chair is in pretty nearly every concert hall in the world. It has conquered completely the restaurants and cafés of the Continent, and it is to be seen often in old inns of the English countryside. Now, the last is a regrettable fact. The Austrian bent-wood chair or settee looks positively effeminate in the country inn with its thin polished legs, its slender-looking back,

and perforated, mechanically made seat. Something is called for of a greater weight of timber, which shall look more in keeping with the building and more in accordance with the solid unimpassioned, phlegmatic way of life of rural districts. Let us have the chair or settle made by the village wheelwright or carpenter, rather than the product of an Austrian factory.

But in the Windsor chair we have a type which can certainly compete with bent-wood in strength if not in lightness. The Windsor chair, besides, is capable of much greater variety of form than the Austrian production. It has a tradition of its own and has as great a celebrity as its more modern competitor. It is heavier and sturdier. It savours somewhat of the kitchen, but although it cannot be regarded as the last word on art craftsmanship, it is not altogether unpleasant to look upon, and is much more comfortable in use than many a chair with greater pretensions to artistic appearance. It is still made by hand and costs very little. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the smaller inns contained many chairs, a few of which are still to be met with, simply made by the village joiner on the lathe. They had plain wooden

seats, and there was very great diversity of "members" in the turned rails. They called for comparatively little skill to make, and beyond their bare proportions showed small ingenuity in making the form comfortable for the body. Frequently they had rush seats. Within recent years chairs of this kind have been sought for and made the base of many extremely interesting seats, designed and constructed by modern craftsmen.

The oldest form of inn table is the trestle. It dates back to the Middle Ages, and although nothing like so much used to-day, it still survives in many an old tap-room. It was originally even a simpler affair than it is now, being merely a board with movable trestles underneath. It could readily be moved and pushed away if space were required on special occasion. At the *Plough Inn*, Birdbrook, Essex, an old thatched house, is a red brick floored tap-room which contains several fine trestle tables and settles of simple design and perfect utility.

But the simple table, chair and settle, beyond which the public part of the inns of the Middle Ages and the smaller alehouses for centuries were unfurnished, except, perhaps, for a stool or backless bench, are nothing

compared with the splendid legacy of sixteenth and seventeenth-century carved oak furniture still left to us in many of the historic hostelries in the shires. Later enthusiasm in collecting has no doubt been responsible for the fine specimens of furniture such as those to be seen at the *Lygon Arms*, Broadway, Worcestershire, and it is extremely difficult to say with certainty how many of the genuinely old pieces to be found in other famous inns originally belonged to the building. There is the *Feathers*, Ludlow, where in the beautiful old dining-room is a fine collection of furniture, hardly in accord with the period of the ceiling, the carved oak overmantel, and other permanent features of the room. The Jacobean and Chippendale chairs are the result of enlightened purchase in later days. One of the finest Jacobean staircases in an inn is that at the *Red Lion*, Truro.

Very little furniture of the Renaissance period, from the Elizabethan carved oak to the mahogany of the later eighteenth century, is peculiar to inns. An exception is the bar, which, of course, was a fixture and part of the inn structure. Our modern bar with its almost invariable ugliness, its row of vertical handles for drawing beer, and its aggressive

cash register, is a poor survival of the Jacobean bar, an example of which is still in existence at the *Maid's Head*, Norwich. It is worthy of recollection that the high stools which enable one to sit at a bar are quite of modern origin. Bar lounging evidently did not become a habit until the nineteenth century. People sat down and had their refreshments at ease.

A table which was sometimes found in Jacobean inns of the larger and more important kind was the one upon which the game of "shovel-board" was played. "Shovel-board" tables were very long, sometimes even as much as ten yards. They were about three feet or three feet six inches wide, and the game played resembles in principle our own deck billiards. Indeed the "shovel-board" table is thought to be the direct ancestor of the modern billiard table, without which, of course, no inn of any size nowadays is complete. The extreme vagueness of the early history of the game of billiards, however, scarcely justifies any dogmatic statement as to its relationship with "shovel-board." A Charles II billiard table with a wooden bed, cork cushions, and corkscrew legs is in the possession of Mr. Robert Rushbrooke, of

Rushbrooke, which seems to show that "shovel-board" tables and billiard tables existed at the same time. This, however, does not do away with the contention of those who assert that the modern game was elaborated from the simpler pastime beloved of Henry VIII and Charles II. The last long "shovel-board" table in an inn was definitely stated by Strutt, in his "Sports and Pastimes of the People of England," to be at "a low public-house in Benjamin Street, Clerkenwell Green." It was three feet broad and thirty-nine feet long.

As "shovel-board" tables were very expensive pieces of furniture, it is doubtful whether any but the most important inns ever had them. The game was played frequently on tables of much smaller dimensions, and the name of "shovel-board" is usually used nowadays to designate a particular form of extending table with hidden leaves. The long Elizabethan and Jacobean tables—rather mistakenly known as refectory tables—which stood on stout turned legs connected by thick rails, were ideal boards for the old game. At Penshurst are, at the present time, two of the finest specimens of long trestle tables in the country. They date from the early

fifteenth century and measure twenty-seven feet long by three feet wide.

Innkeepers, of course, had to keep abreast of the times in the matter of furnishing, and in the coaching era the old hostelries were furnished in the latest and most approved fashion. Hence it is that the Georgian inns, where they have not been denuded of their treasures by enterprising collectors, or turned inside out by some unfortunately advised landlord who preferred Victorian horsehair and mahogany, still contain many interesting pieces of the time of Chippendale, Heppelwhite, and Sheraton. A warning may not be out of place to those who imagine that these famous names applied to furniture really indicate that the cabinet-making was done by the craftsmen themselves. Without unimpeachable documentary evidence, it is utterly impossible to ascribe any fine piece of mahogany to any one of the three great cabinet-makers of the eighteenth century. The names indicate nowadays certain periods which are fairly definitely fixed, and certain easily recognizable styles of work. In many an old inn you will see in the coffee-room or commercial room side tables, dining tables, card tables, chairs, settees, mirrors, long-case

clocks, bureaux, and corner cupboards which may typify any or all of the great periods of the eighteenth century, and it is quite likely that down in the hall or in the corridors and kitchen you will discover specimens of Jacobean chests, gate-leg tables, dressers, a "bread-and-cheese" cupboard, perhaps, and other relics of even an earlier age. The fact was, of course, that pieces of furniture were bought as they were required, and when an inn had a history running well into two centuries it would have been remarkable indeed if a heterogeneous collection had not been got together. It is only the modern craze for collecting which has robbed the inn of so many of its treasures. The experts will tell you that the fact of a piece of furniture being old is no guarantee whatever of its worth, excepting whatever value may be attached to mere length of years. A joiner in the country, say in Shropshire or Yorkshire, might not make a piece of furniture for mine host of the *Chequers* or *Blue Lion* as well or in such good taste as would the first-class cabinet-makers of London. It is quite likely that he would invest it with some local character, and if this is well preserved in the piece it has its worth on this account alone. But country

The "Wheatsheaf" Inn, Loughton, Essex

made Chippendale, Heppelwhite, or Sheraton furniture, although charming enough, has rarely any exceptional value. Wherever the contents of a large country house was offered for sale, the innkeeper as a man of some substance would buy, and it is this fact which explains in some cases the finds of really valuable furniture which have been made at old inns.

The sort of advertisement—common enough then as now—which attracted local competition can be realised by the following, from the *Kentish Gazette* of September 21st, 1790, which announced the sale in the Isle of Thanet of :

> "All the genuine *Household Furniture*, comprising bedsteads with marine and other furniture, fine goose feather beds, blankets, etc., mahogany wardrobes, chest of drawers, ditto dressing tables, mahogany press, bedsteads, with green check furniture ; mahogany escritoire ; ditto writing table with drawers ; ditto dining and Pembroke tables ; library table with steps ; mahogany and other chairs ; pier glasses and girandoles, in carved and gilt frames ; a neat sofa ; an exceeding good eight-day clock ; Wilton and other carpets ; register and Bath stoves ; kitchen range ; smoke-jack and other useful kitchen furniture ; two large brewing-coppers, exceedingly good brewing utensils, and other effects."

This was the sale of the property of a man of quality. It is probable from the description

that the furniture was comparatively new at that time. The Pembroke table, the mahogany escritoire, the pier glasses and girandoles and other items were plainly eighteenth century. The enumerated articles would no doubt be the most attractive pieces in the sale. Whether there was any old oak or not cannot be ascertained from the advertisement, but it is quite likely, for it would never be quoted, being thought at that time of no value. The catalogues of such sales were always left with the chief innkeepers of the neighbourhood, and to the innkeeper came any likely buyers who would discuss the mansion and its contents. Foreign competition in the way of dealers from London, was not to be feared in those days, and the "neat sofa" and "exceeding good eight-day clock" were quite as likely to find their way to the coaching inn as to any of the prosperous farmhouses in the neighbourhood.

A fairly common fixture in old inns was the angle cupboard. It was usually not a separate piece of furniture, but was fitted into the angle of the wall. It takes up little space, and was convenient for the storage of crockery.

There is a famous angle cupboard at the *New Inn*, New Romney.

The bedchambers of the old coaching inns had as an inevitable feature the four-posters, now, by the way, again coming into fashion. These bedsteads were not always fine in design by any means. The turning of the posts was often quite clumsy enough, but they were never so hideous as the tester beds of the nineteenth century. The prettiest bed-posts were those of the latter half of the Georgian period, and Heppelwhite in particular is credited with the design of some of the most charming. As to drapery, which all good chambermaids kept spotless and clean, the following suggestion from Heppelwhite's own book may be quoted.

"It may be executed of almost any stuff which the loom produces. White dimity, plain or corded, is peculiarly applicable for the furniture, which, with a fringe with a gymp head, produces an effect of elegance and neatness truly agreeable." He goes on to say: "The Manchester stuffs have been wrought into bed furniture with good success. Printed cottons and linens are also very suitable, the elegance and variety of patterns of which afford as much scope for taste, elegance and simplicity as the most lively fancy can wish. In general the lining to these

kinds of furniture is a plain white cotton. To furniture of a dark pattern a green silk lining may be used with good effect."

This description gives a very fair idea of the way in which beds were draped about a hundred to a hundred and fifty years ago. Of course, the word "furniture" in the above quotation is an old name for the hangings. It is used in the sense that hangings furnished the bed.

Tall-boys were found in the old inn bedroom, the corner washstand with its blue and white crockery, and one of those small loose mirrors (far too small for the modern beauty) with three little drawers underneath. It is quite common in any country inn nowadays to meet with these simple furnishings, though the four-poster has given way in many instances to cheap "black and brass" or "all-black" bedsteads of the age of mechanical ingenuity, and instead of a bed of goose-down you shall lie on wool over that really very comfortable rascal the wire mattress. The immortal Jingle, who surely puts into four words more philosophy on the subject of a good inn than anyone else in fiction, summed up everything when he remarked, "Good house; nice beds."

The day should not be far distant when the new inn, not large fashionable hotels, will seek to furnish in some better way than by the purchase of heavy and ornate cast-iron tables with marble tops for the saloon bar, with utterly unsuitable saddle-bag suites for the parlour, with flashing mirrors everywhere, and ornamental crockery, palm stands of dubious origin, and gilt leather papers as decorative enrichments.

However much influence the Arts and Crafts movement has had in the furnishing of the domestic dwelling, it has left practically untouched the house which belongs of right to the public. There are craftsmen, however, many of them, whose furniture seems as if it were designed specially for the country inn, yet it is doubtful whether one was ever commissioned to supply the equipment which would give such character and charm to the modern licensed house. Some of the pieces of furniture, such as plain straightforward oaken drawers, benches, chairs, sturdy tables, cupboards and the like which have for many years been exhibited by members of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, would be infinitely more suitable in the inn than anywhere else. It is not apparently lack of

money which makes those who furnish inns anew look to the modern and often hideous productions of commerce for their furniture. It would seem to be rather lack of knowledge or taste. No publican exists but wants to make his house attractive; but, except occasional advice about the preservation of the character of old inns by the retention of what old furniture there may be and the purchase of other pieces in a style suitable to the building, there would appear to be no influence whatever to prevent refurnishing in a manner which suggests too often an attempt to reproduce a railway hotel in miniature. At the moment the most accessible good furniture for the new inns is to be found in the modern reproductions of well-known styles which are to be purchased through the ordinary commercial channels and at commercial prices. It is the commonest experience to go into a country inn of undeniable architectural charm, even if the attraction be merely that it seems a simple homely looking building and nothing else, and to find inside furnishing as bad or worse than that of the cheap lodging-house. Now the inn should be a cut above that. It should not be too much to expect a little simplicity in furnishing. It is the

The "Skittles" Inn, Letchworth, Herts

attempt to elaborate which usually results in such artistic disaster. We have in memory many a little public-house, whose parlour is so small as to prohibit the slightest effort at decorative detail, and others—obscure ale-houses some of them—where obviously there is not the wherewithal to provide up-to-date splendours, and in these instances the plain, honest benches, the trestle tables, the Windsor chairs and homely dresser constitute an interior which could scarcely be improved. There being no chance to elaborate, well has fortunately been left alone.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE INNKEEPER

"A seemly man our Hosté was withal.
For to have been a marshall in a hall.
A largé man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgess is there none in Chepe;
Bold of his speech and wise, and well-y-taught
And of manhood him lackedé right naught.
Like thereto he was right a merry man."

A MODEL to all innkeepers was Our Hosté of the *Tabard;* a born leader of men, quick to understand each man's individualities, and full of kindly sympathy for all. Ready of wit, he was ever careful to remove the sting before it could rankle. A man of education, he could adapt himself to his company and be skilful in devices for their comfort and recreation. Not least of his many qualifications as a landlord was his presence of mind in averting disputes by a judicious change of the subject.

We no longer send innkeepers to Parliament, nor do members of Parliament, as a rule, undertake the personal superintendence of

hotels, as they often did in the fourteenth century. But the type of innkeeper portrayed as Harry Bailey of the *Tabard*, in Southwark, is by no means extinct. You may find him if you search well under many an old gable or Queen Anne cornice—sometimes even in a smart new red-brick hotel. Nor is he lacking on the great ancient trade routes that run right through Europe—not even in those establishments recommended by Baedeker or Bradshaw—though the new races of purse-proud tourists and Cook's excursionists are fast expelling him in favour of the servile and mercenary business manager. In a humbler way, the village and wayside inns contain good men and true who follow in the footsteps of Harry Bailey. Such inns, often kept by retired tradesmen, blacksmiths or farmers, are a boon and a blessing to the neighbourhood. They are not only a centre of recreation for the village labourer; they tend also to educate and uplift him, ridiculous as the assertion may seem to those who have never put on an old coat and tramped through the by-ways into Arcady.

Diverse and sundry are the concerns in which the village innkeeper is called upon to give advice. He is the arbitrator in disputes,

he solves weighty problems of rural etiquette. He knows the inner secrets of every home and can weigh the respective merits of his clientele to a nicety. To him it is that each one comes for help in trouble, social or financial, and his charity is given irrespective of politics or creed, given considerately as becomes a man of affairs, and without stint. The parish clergy know him as a valuable ally, and it is not unusual to find him acting as churchwarden. Nay, only the other day we saw a procession headed by the worthy village publican carrying the cross, and a manful and decorous crossbearer he proved himself.

It is surprising what good fellows innkeepers generally are, when one considers all the difficulties surrounding their occupation. They are the legitimate prey of every tax and rate collector. We know of one middle-class beerhouse where the rent charged by the brewers is only £50 a year, but which is rated at more than double that amount. The innkeeper, for the purpose of taxation, is merged in the licensed victualler. He is told that his business of selling fermented liquors is a valuable monopoly, and a very heavy licensed duty is exacted for the privilege. Yet he is

expected to view with equanimity the dozens of bottles of beer, wine and spirits passing his door in the trucks of the grocer, who by virtue of a nominal licence can easily undersell him. Long after the hour when he is bound by law to close, he hears the shouts of the bibulous in the neighbouring political club; on Sunday mornings he sees a procession of jugs and bottles issuing from this same untaxed establishment. Blackmailed by the police, and spied upon by the hirelings of all kinds of busybody societies, he goes to the Brewster Sessions in each year in fear and trembling. The licensing justices must by law have no interest whatever either in a brewery or a licensed house of any description, but they may be, and frequently are, teetotallers. Every other subject of his Majesty is entitled to plead his cause before his peers. The licensed victualler, alone of all Englishmen since the days of Magna Charta, has to submit to be tried by enemies who have sworn his ruin.

How we all love to see, on the stage, at least, if not in real life, jovial, hearty old souls like Mine Host who entertained Falstaff at the *Garter*, or old Will Boniface (first landlord to be so dubbed) of the *Beaux Stratagem*. It

is disappointing that Farquhar was such a wronghead dramatist as to make all his interesting characters vicious. We cannot believe this fat and pompous host with a wholesome faith in the virtues of his brew could really have been a scoundrel or capable of conspiring with footpads. No! Julius Cæsar was a better judge of fat human nature than Farquhar! Depend upon it, Boniface slept after his potations the sleep of an honest man. Just listen to him:

> Sir, you shall taste my Anno Domini, I have lived in Lichfield, man and boy, above eight-and-fifty years, and I believe have not consumed eight-and-fifty ounces of meat.
>
> *Aimwell.* At a meal, you mean, if one may guess your sense by your bulk.
>
> *Boniface.* Not in my life, Sir; I have fed purely upon ale; I have ate my ale, drank my ale, and I always sleep upon ale.
>
> *Enter tapster with a Tankard.*
>
> Now, sir, you shall see; your worship's health; Ha! delicious, delicious—fancy it Burgundy, only fancy it, and 'tis worth ten shillings a quart.
>
> *Aimwell* (*drinks*). 'Tis confounded strong.
>
> *Boniface.* Strong! It must be so; or how would we be strong that drink it?

Hawthorne tried hard to find Mr. Boniface's inn at Lichfield, but in vain. He had to content himself with the *Black Swan*, once

owned by Dr. Johnson. Farquhar was careful not to indicate the particular inn referred to, if it ever existed there. Not that the dramatists in bygone days lived in fear of a libel action. Witness a farce by J. M. Morton, in which Mrs. Fidget, the landlady of the *Dolphin* at Portsmouth, is most cruelly pilloried for her dishonesty and meanness. In "Naval Engagements" Charles Dance portrays Mr. Short of the *Fountain* in the same town as a scurvy impudent rascal, taking advantage of customers who had spent the night not wisely nor too well, to charge them for an unordered and unserved breakfast. Short's sanctimonious morality and his devices to detain customers in a hurry, so that they are compelled to stay in the inn for dinner, are a valuable humorous element of this play.

Fielding's innkeepers are all exquisitely drawn, with the lifelike touches of a fine student of human nature in its infinite variety. We love best of all the host of that inn where Parson Adams met the braggart, untruthful squire who offered him a fine living and endless other benefits without the slightest intention of fulfilling his promises. Mine Host stands by chuckling inwardly at the good jest when the squire undertakes to defray

the bill for the lodging and entertainment of the party. Nor does he lose his good-humour when he finds next morning the joke turned against himself and that the worthy curate has not a farthing in his purse.

"Trust you, master? that I will with all my heart. I honour the clergy too much to deny trusting one of them for such a trifle; besides, I like your fear of never paying me. I have lost many a debt in my lifetime; but was promised to be paid them all in a very short time. I will score this reckoning for the novelty of it; it is the first, I do assure you, of its kind. But what say you, master, shall we have t'other pot before we part? It will waste but a little chalk more; and, if you never pay me a shilling, the loss will not ruin me."

By way of contrast we are given the termagant Mrs. Tow-wouse, whose ill-temper and selfish grasping ways were always counteracting her easy-going spouse's mild attempts in the direction of generosity:

"Mrs. Tow-wouse had given no utterance to the sweetness of her temper. Nature had taken such pains in her countenance, that Hogarth himself never gave more expression to a picture. Her person was short, thin, and

crooked; her forehead projected in the middle and thence descended in a declivity to the top of her nose, which was sharp and red, and would have hung over her lips, had not Nature turned up the end of it; her lips were two bits of skin, which, whenever she spoke, she drew together in a purse; her chin was peaked; and at the upper end of that skin which composed her cheeks, stood two bones, that almost hid a pair of small red eyes. Add to this a voice most wonderfully adapted to the sentiments it was to convey, being both loud and hoarse."

Surely such a picture is worthy of being beside Skelton's description of the frowsy ale wife of Leatherhead.

Dean Swift encountered a lady of the same contrary nature at the *Three Crosses*, on the road between Dunchurch and Daventry. He left his opinion of his hostess on one of the windows:

"To the Landlord.
There hang three crosses at thy door,
Hang up thy wife and she'll make four."

And here we may be permitted to introduce an adventure of our own. A party of three, we were engaged on a walk across the Dunes, near Nieuport, and had lost our way. Flemish

was the language of the district, and this in its spoken form was a sealed book to all three. By and by we came to a little roadside estaminet which we entered, and in correct exercise-book French inquired the nearest way to Furnes. The proprietor replied by placing before us three large glasses of the local beverage. It was a hot, dusty day, we were thirsty and the beer light and harmless. So we drank it and then again inquired the way to Furnes. For answer our glasses were forthwith refilled. When we shook our heads in dissent, the obliging caterer brought out in turn every different kind of bottle and brand of cigar and cigarette the establishment could muster. It was no good. We did not wish to drink or smoke.

He was perplexed and sat down for a few moments to scratch his head and ponder over the puzzling problem. At last he decided to do what many wiser men before have done when in a quandary: he called his wife. Maybe female intuition might pierce into these mysteries where dull reason vainly groped in darkness.

She came, pink and rosy as some glorious dawn, tripping as lightly as a forty-eight inch waist and a weight somewhere near fourteen

stone would permit. After darting a scornful glance at her lord and master she turned to us with a sweet smile. We asked in Parisian tongue the nearest way to Furnes. In a trice she placed before us three pint glasses of Flemish white beer. We manifested our disapproval very strongly ; we did not want any beer, and her husband watched and smoked his pipe with a cynical grin as she brought us, in vain, the bottles and various other articles from the shelves.

Then a brilliant idea occurred to one of the trio. After all, the Flemish language is only a dialect of German ! So in truly classic German he inquired of the puzzled dame— Would she kindly tell us the nearest way to Furnes ?

A bright smile of intelligence illumined her features. She understood now exactly what we wanted, and popping into the kitchen behind, she soon returned with three steaming plates full of most delicious hotch-potch soup. There were haricots, lentils, cabbage stumps, garlic, chicken bones, sausages and other articles unidentified in that soup. But it was appetising ; we remembered that we were hungry from a long walk and sat down and absorbed it with a good-will.

That woman, we know for certain, became our devoted friend from the moment. She will never forget us. She demurred very strongly to our paying anything for the refreshment, and tried hard to force three more pints of that terribly mild beer on us before we left. Not only had we appreciated her cooking at its fullest value—we had also proved her abilities as a cosmopolitan woman of business—and, depend upon it, the fact has been rubbed into her partner in life many times since then!

But of worthy, buxom good-tempered landladies there is always a plentiful supply, faithful and true in the defence of their friends, like the good widow McCandlish in "Guy Mannering," or beneficent fairies, ready to adjust the difficulties of eloping young couples and their several guardians with the delicacy and tact of a Mrs. Bartick.[1] The fair sex have usually all the business qualities for the conduct of a good inn, and when with these are conjoined kindness of disposition the traveller is blest indeed.

Once upon a time, so tradition hath it—there was a barmaid in a Westminster tavern

[1] "Three Deep; or All on the Wing." A once favourite farcical play by Joseph Lunn.

The Recreation Room in the "Skittles" Inn, Letchworth

who married her master. After his death, she continued to carry on the business, and had occasion to seek the advice of a lawyer named Hyde. Mr. Hyde wooed and married her. Then Hyde became Lord Chancellor and was ennobled as Lord Clarendon. Their daughter married the Duke of York, and was the mother of Mary and Anne Stewart. So the landlady of an inn became the grandmother of two queens. Most history books are content to describe Lord Clarendon's second wife as the daughter of Sir Thomas Aylesbury; but the supporters of the traditional view maintain that this was an invention of the Court Party.

We have not yet encountered an innkeeper exactly of the same type as old John Willet, of the *Maypole* at Chigwell, that "burly large-headed man with a fat face, which betokened profound obstinacy and slowness of apprehension, combined with a very strong reliance upon his own merits." We meet occasionally in other walks of life these small-minded individuals whom chance has endowed with pride of place and the opportunity to tyrannize over all around them. Like the sovereign owner of the ancient hostelry with its "huge zigzag chimneys and more gable

ends than a lazy man would care to count on a sunny day," not to speak of its diamond-pane lattices and its ceilings blackened by the hand of time and heavy with massive beams, they imagine that their reign will endure to the end. Is there in all literature a more pathetic piece of writing than that in which Charles Dickens depicts the humiliation of John Willet, when the Gordon rioters invade the *Maypole*, and the fallen tyrant finds himself "sitting down in an armchair and watching the destruction of his property, as if it were some queer play or entertainment of an astonishing and stupefying nature, but having no reference to himself—that he could make out—at all?"

Innkeepers have been reckoned among the poets. John Taylor, the "Water Poet," so called because he commenced life as a waterman, and because so many of his voluminous works deal with aquatic matters, kept a tavern in Phœnix Alley, Longacre. Being a faithful royalist he set up the sign of the *Mourning Crown* over his house to express his sorrow at the tragic death of Charles I, but was compelled by the Parliament to take it down. He replaced it with his own portrait and the following lines:

"There is many a head hangs for a sign;
Then, gentle reader, why not mine?"

The episode is commemorated in a rhyming pamphlet issued by him at the same time:

"My signe was once a *Crowne*, but now it is
Changed by a sudden metamorphosis.
The Crowne was taken downe, and in the stead
Is placed John Taylor's or the *Poet's Head.*"

Of Taylor's works, the mere enumeration of which occupies eight closely printed pages in "Lownde's Bibliographer's Manual," the best known are his "Prayse of Cleane Linen," and "The Pennyless Pilgrimage," descriptive of a journey on foot from London to Edinburgh, "not carrying any money to and fro, neither begging, borrowing or asking meat, drink or lodging." In 1620, he made a similar journey from London to Prague, and published an account of it.

Scarcely less eminent in his way was Ned Ward, the "Publican Poet," immortalised in the "Dunciad." His works are scurrilous and coarse, yet not to be despised by students of London topography in the reign of Queen Anne. His writings in the *London Spy* describe the London taverns and inns of his day, and he produced several imitations of Butler's "Hudibras," including a versified

translation of "Don Quixote," and "Hudibras Redivivus." The latter work obtained for its author the privilege of standing twice in the pillory and of paying a fine of forty marks. His inn stood in Woodbridge Street, Clerkenwell, and his poetical invitation to customers includes a reference to the Red Bull Theatre, close by, made famous by Shakespeare and Edward Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College :

> "There on that ancient, venerable ground,
> Where Shakespeare in heroic buskins trod,
> Within a good old fabrick may be found
> Celestial liquors, fit to charm a god."

Very different was the side in politics favoured by Sam House, "the patriotic publican." Apprenticed as a brewhouse cooper, his active industrious habits enabled him, when only twenty-five years of age, to lease an inn at the corner of Peter Street, Wardour Street, Soho, called the *Gravel Pits*, which name he changed to the *Intrepid Fox*, or *The Cap of Liberty*. In 1763 he very warmly espoused the cause of John Wilkes, and sold his beer at threepence a pot in honour of the champion of freedom. Of unflinching political integrity, Sam House was in most respects a well-meaning, good-hearted man, with but

one reprehensible vice—a habit of swearing most horribly, no matter what the company. Many are the unprintable anecdotes related with regard to this failing, when the most exalted personages were conversing with him. Another eccentric feature of his character was illustrated when he had laid a wager with a young man to race him in Oxford Road. Just when his victory seemed assured, a mischievous wag in the crowd suddenly shouted, "D——n Fox and all his friends, say I!" Forthwith Sam forgot all about his race, and regardless of protests from his backers, turned round and administered a sound drubbing to the blasphemer. This gave great amusement to the spectators, but meanwhile his rival had passed the winning-post. Sam cheerfully paid the penalty, consoling himself that he had lost the race in a good cause, while avenging an insult to his political idol.

CHAPTER XIX

PUBLIC-HOUSE REFORM

"NOTHING suits worse with vice than want of sense," remarked Sir Harry Wilding in the "Constant Couple." For vice we might read benevolence and find the maxim equally appropriate. Good judgment is especially needful in that kind of philanthropy so much in vogue at the present time, wherein one class of the community interests itself in improving the condition of another class with which it is imperfectly acquainted.

Take, for instance, the housing of the working classes. A committee of maiden ladies meet together and engage the services of some clever young architect. The local landowner finds the funds, and very soon a row of cottages has been built of dainty picturesque appearance, and everything inside them equally lovely. The sanitation is of the latest, the rooms are light and airy. All sorts of clever devices are introduced to economize space, nice cupboards, economical cooking stoves with every appliance to delight the

housewife, and even a bath artfully hidden beneath a trap-door just in front of the kitchen fire. There is even high art decoration approved by the Kyrle Society. In short, these cottages would be a joy and a treasure if only the ungrateful labourer would consent to leave his insanitary hovel and come and take up his abode therein. He emphatically declines to do so because they contain no "best room."

The committee of maiden ladies are very indignant at the idea of the working man insisting on his best room, an apartment which remains hermetically closed from week-end to week-end, reserved only as a shrine for the family Bible and for the reception of a few highly-favoured visitors. He ought, they contend, to be satisfied with the big airy living-room, specially designed for his family, and has no business to complain that his little heirlooms will be at the mercy of inquisitive and mischievous children. But it will be a bad day for England when the "best room" disappears from the artisan's home. It is by long tradition his castle, his secret keep, the innermost temple of his religion. Every patriotic instinct of the poor man has its centre within that little stuffy apartment.

Home to the working man means the best room. The safety of the best room justifies all the national expenditure on a standing army and a huge navy. In the defence of that best room he is prepared to send his sons to lay their bones in some nameless soldier's grave in the most distant corner of the empire. Take away the best room and the wage-earner has no home worth either working for or fighting for. He becomes an atheist, an anarchist, and a general outcast.

A similar lack of appreciation of human nature is shown by certain philanthropists in dealing with the use by working men of the public-house as a place of resort. How much better, they urge, if the workman would spend his time in more intellectual surroundings—in reading rooms, popular lectures or entertainments, Christian endeavour societies, etc., etc. And so they exert all their influence over licensing justices, the police and other authorities, inciting them to make the public-house as uncomfortable as possible ; with the result that a series of very undesirable institutions having all the worst qualities of the gin palace, without its publicity or proper means of supervision, are coming into existence. Penny readings,

lectures, and other religious or educational centres are well enough in their way ; but the man of few home resources yearns for the gossip of the alehouse. Only there can he find what the soul of every human being longs for, the company of his own kind, and recreation and amusement which he himself can assist in supplying.

Still, if it is to continue, the public-house must be reformed and improved in some way to satisfy the national conscience. And a book of this kind seems to be incomplete unless it contains some suggestions as to the direction in which reform ought to proceed.

In the first place, we would urge the inexpediency of any further legislation. Anybody, who as a parish worker or as an employer of labour has interested himself in a model public-house, will agree with us in this. No other institution in the country is so hopelessly law-ridden and police-ridden. We might make an exception in the case of the licence itself. All taxation of alcoholic liquors should be direct and should be levied at the fountain head—whether distiller, brewer or importer. The licence for retailing such liquors should be a moderate and fixed amount like all other licences. Why the publican should

be penalised at so high a rate, when the grocer, whose annual sales often exceed those of all the public-houses in the district combined, is let off with a nominal sum, passes all comprehension.

To impose a high licence on the hotel or tavern-keeper is, in the opinion of those who have studied the subject carefully, a mistake both economically and morally. First, because a large and increasing portion of his sales consists in wares which the outside dealer supplies without the necessity of either tax or licence. Secondly, there is a serious temptation offered to the publican to recoup the high expenditure on his licence by inducing his customers to drink. And it is most important that men of the highest character and responsibility should be encouraged to take office as innkeepers and publicans. This can hardly be the case while the high licence adds so seriously to the amount of unremunerative capital required for embarking in the business. No other trade is handicapped by such an iniquitous impost.

We must not, of course, shirk that ugly word, "monopoly value," introduced by the Licensing Act of 1902. But it is a monopoly

of dwindling value riddled by half a dozen competing agencies and minimised by all sorts of vexatious restrictions. Sunday trading is not a desirable thing, but a visit to any favourite suburban resort on Sunday morning reveals a state of affairs only to be paralleled in Gilbertian comic opera. Tobacconists, sweet-stuff shops, tea gardens and enterprising Italian caterers are all doing a roaring trade without let or hindrance. Meanwhile the "Licensed Victualler," who pays so high a price for his "monopoly" as a purveyor of refreshments, is compelled on pain of extinction to keep his doors bolted and barred against all but the few hardy souls who have accomplished the Sabbath Day's journey.

There is an underworld in the drink trade. Provincial allotment holders never seem to lack a good supply of the national beverage on Sunday mornings; it does not flow from the local alehouse. Quarterns of gin and whisky are obtainable in London from some unknown sources at all hours of the night. One of the authors, associated for many years with a famous church in the poorer districts of central London, made some astonishing discoveries with regard to this illicit drink

traffic. Most of it is the direct outcome of the oppressive one-sided licensing laws.

On the liquor question itself, we would suggest that the tax on beer should be graduated, and a comparatively light duty be imposed on beer guaranted to be brewed entirely from malt and hops, and containing only the small proportion of alcohol necessary to carry the phosphates—say not more than four per cent. We believe that the revenue would not ultimately lose much by this concession, while the result of its general adoption as a beverage would be highly beneficial. No better preventative could be imagined against nervous depression, the great curse of modern life, and the real cause of the drink and drug-taking habits—than a revival of the good old English mild ale such as our forefathers brewed in the pre-reformation Church Houses.

We have already referred to the work of the Public Refreshment House Association, and much good is bound to result from the efforts of this body in improving the status of the public-house. Its methods and the rules laid down for the management of the houses under its control are worthy of all praise. The

foresight and self-denial of its directorate are especially commendable, in that the society seeks to co-operate in the formation of separate county trusts, rather than to aggrandize itself by acquiring an unlimited number of licences. The danger of a gigantic trust, as of a national monopoly, would be that enormous power might, in the second generation, fall into the hands of an ambitious and tyrannical central staff. One fear only we have with regard to the P.R.H.A. Its establishments are so attractive and altogether so desirable, that like all philanthropic efforts they will end by benefiting a higher class than was at first intended. The lady cyclist and the week-ender will avail themselves of their advantages rather than the rural labourer. And we hope that the wise authorities at headquarters will guard against this difficulty by encouraging games, and providing magazines for the users of the tap-room.

A worthy country cleric of our acquaintance takes exception to the preferential commission which the Association allows to its local managers in order to push the sale of temperance drinks. He urges that no temperance drink has hitherto been invented which is either thirst quenching or wholesome. The tea

and coffee habit would end by making the villager as neurotic as his cockney cousin. Aerated waters, flavoured with narcotic drugs and saturated with gaseous mineral carbonic dioxide, put a severe strain on the action of the heart; fruit syrups are doctored with nerve-destroying formaline to prevent natural fermentation. Even the popular ginger beer and ginger ale are not unimpeachable. Ginger is a drug injurious to the coating of the stomach; and in some modern brands the more poisonous capsicum is employed as a cheaper substitute.

But on general grounds, we think this encouragement of temperance drinks is altogether a judicious move. The public-house exists for the benefit and use of all classes and sections of the community; the teetotaller has as much right there as anybody else, and it is desirable that he should exercise that right as frequently as possible. The popular idea that the tavern is only a place for the consumption of certain alcoholic drinks must be dispelled; such liquors have to be on sale there merely because a large majority of Englishmen habitually desire them as beverages, and it is not the duty of those in charge to decide whether they shall, or shall not,

The "Bell" Inn, Bell Common, Epping

continue to do so. Wine, beer and spirits are an essential part, but still only one department of the tavern-keeper's business.

Village trusts have been introduced with success in some rural districts. A body of trustees is elected by the whole parish for a term of years, on much the same lines as the Parish Council. Management on a democratic basis has its good points, if only the natives can be roused to take a keen interest in the subject. But all these revolutionary displacements of "the trade" are unnecessary. The good conduct of the public-house depends not so much on those who manage it as on those who habitually use it, and on the growth of a healthy national appreciation of its value. If only men of good-will made it a rule to visit from time to time the various licensed houses of the neighbourhood, their very presence would be a wonderful help to the cause of morality. A good understanding with the landlord should be established, and then suggestions for the improvement of the house quietly and considerately discussed with him. We know of parish priests who, facing sneers about "Beer and Bible," have pursued this course, and their efforts have brought blessing and reward. But it must be

understood that all genuine progress is slow. The *Public*-house is not so much the moulder as the index of public morals; and any violent attempts at reforming it are as absurd as to manipulate a barometer with a view to improving the weather.

In a recent speech the Bishop of Birmingham cited as his ideal of the public-house, an establishment in Barcelona which he had visited several times, and which struck him as being specially delightful. He described it as an immense room in which there must have been about a thousand people. They were of all classes; a good many of them were artisans who wore their blouses, and they were there with their wives and children constantly. They were drinking all sorts of things—beer, wine, tea, coffee, or milk, and some of them were drinking a peculiar compound of a kind of pink colour, the nature of which he was not able to ascertain through an imperfect knowledge of the language. There was rather a good band, but one could not hear it much because all were talking and laughing and making themselves extremely agreeable to one another. He asked himself every time he went there—Was not that type of place of public resort, public refreshment, and public

amusement entirely desirable ? He had been there on Sundays and week-days, and he never felt that he had seen or heard anything that was not entirely desirable. Every time he went there—and he could find the same thing in other countries and cities—he said to himself : What was there in the nature of things why we could not have exactly this kind of place of public amusement and recreation—this kind of public-house with regard to which they would not feel the slightest desire for any legislation to restrict the opportunity of women or children or of anybody else going into it ?

There are several public-houses in England where the presence of an enlightened thinker like Dr. Gore would be welcomed. One in particular occurs to us as we write—the *Ship* at Ospringe, near Faversham. The climate of the Swale marshes will not admit of a hall to contain over a thousand people, but here there is a room which on Saturday nights might contain any number up to a hundred and fifty. There is no band—the police would speedily interfere at the first trumpet blare ; nor any children—thanks to a recent Act of Parliament. But his lordship would find a happy good-humoured company, young

men and old, wives and sweethearts, some drinking beer, some lemonade, young girls eating their supper of bread and cheese or fish, all engaged in merry converse, or listening with uncritical good-nature to songs and recitations provided by such among their number as are inclined to oblige. If a pianist happens to turn up, so much the better; otherwise the vocalist does his best without accompaniment. All is homely and hearty. We have visited the *Ship* many times and never perceived any signs of objectionable conduct. If it lacks any of the advantages of its Barcelona rival, we must blame the law and the licensing authorities—certainly not the institution.

In Spain, as in Germany, the inn or the tavern is regarded as an essential element of civic life, not as a place to be discouraged and despised. A century or two ago all good and respectable Britons avoided the theatre, and the drama in England became a byword for immorality and licentiousness. A better spirit arose; churchmen and ladies of refinement interested themselves in the theatre; the ban was removed, and now we can take our sisters, cousins and aunts to see an English play without fear of incurring their reproaches.

Angel Inn, Woolhampton

Perchance, also, a new era may await the public-house, and its value as an educative and steadying influence on the democracy will be understood.

We live in the midst of a period when great revolutionary changes are impending. Never before has the struggle for existence among the masses been so keenly felt, or the cruel differences of opportunity of rich and poor so widely ventilated. Class privilege and hereditary endowment seem alike destined for the melting-pot. What will emerge none can tell. We have shown how in previous ages, whenever there were great political or social changes, the tavern played its part. Within the doors of the public-house all men are brethren. There alone class can meet class and discuss their difficulties freely and even dispassionately. Society has too long left the lower orders to estimate the advantage of culture from its Tony Lumpkins. It is a great opportunity. The venerable house of call, bequeathed to us by the ages, beckons all to come within its kindly shelter, out of the storms of class hatred and political prejudice. Churlish and short-sighted indeed will those be who reject the invitation.

For, after all, the old antiquary whom we

met with in the chapter on the Church Inns was right. The keynote of the public-house and its true purpose in life is Christian Charity. Charity which suffereth long and is kind, bearing all things, envying not, nor believing any evil; and without which we are nothing. The greatest thing in Earth or Heaven.

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